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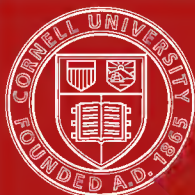
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LIFE AND LETTERS OF H. TAINE

PART I

1828-1852

PART II

1853-1870

PART III

1870-1892

LIFE AND LETTERS OF H. TAINÉ

1870-1892

Abridged and Translated from the French by

E. SPARVEL-BAYLY

LONDON

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NOTE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

THE first two volumes of Taine's "Life and Letters" were issued in an English version by Mrs. Devonshire respectively in 1902 and 1904. The last two volumes of the French edition were published by Messrs. Hachette in 1905 and 1907. The publishers of the English translation regret that the aid of a translator so admittedly accomplished as Mrs. Devonshire has not been available for the concluding volumes. A slightly abridged rendering of the French Text has been given of the second half of the work. It will be found, however, they firmly believe, that the unity of the book has not suffered perceptibly by the condensation of these two volumes into one. The omissions, as a matter of fact, are confined in a large measure to more or less technical details concerning the plan of Taine's *chef d'œuvre*; a fair proportion of which were relegated to appendixes in volumes three and four of the French original. A considerable amount of repetition has also been avoided. Hardly anything that is omitted can be deemed likely to prove of primary interest to the English public, or representative of any side of Taine's thought unfamiliar to the reader. Great care has been expended upon the preparation of the abridgement and of the general index that accompanies it.

NOTE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

The original version was delayed owing to the extreme difficulty of bringing the letters together and sorting them, in accordance with the strongly expressed wish of Taine that his private life should be kept screened from the public gaze, so far as the life of the man could be kept definitely apart from that of the writer. "Any advertisement of private feeling is my bugbear." The last volume, however, by the consensus of all the best judges, was well worth waiting for. What has long been desired has now been accomplished by the completion of the work in the manner described above. It is believed that the third volume of the English version is not unworthy of its predecessor and that the reader will have in the three volumes together a work more than worthy to rank with the two brilliant achievements of the writer already so well known in this country and in America as Taine's *Notes on England*, and Taine's *History of English Literature*. The controversy upon the historicity of Taine's conceptions may be said to have only just commenced ; but no doubt whatever can be entertained as to the calibre of his intellect or the marvellously invigorating influence of his literary style.

T. S.

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CHAPTER I

THE WAR

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Tours—Work on the Committee for
National Defence—Pau—Notes upon
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dence

Taine returned from Germany in much anxiety of mind. Brought up as he had been in a non-military atmosphere he knew nothing about military matters, and although during his four years as Examiner for St. Cyr he had become acquainted with a number of educated young Frenchmen thoroughly characteristic of the upper middle classes of the country, he knew little of their superior officers. He had certainly heard alarming details as to the Italian campaign through his friend, the Baron de Champlouis,¹ and further details as to the colonial expedition through his brother-in-law M. Chevrillon, but this was all that he actually realized of the state of affairs. When the war broke out with such amazing suddenness, Taine believed, as most Frenchmen believed, that the generals were equal to their task, and that adequate provision had been made for the

¹ Lieut.-Col. Viotor de Champlouis was severely wounded at the battle of Melegnano.

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campaign. Even with this conviction, however, he knew enough of the serious purpose and tenacity of Germany to cause him some uneasiness as to the issue of the war. The instability of France in her home politics especially disquieted him. History had taught him to recognize the elements that make for disorder, and he saw that these elements, though at the moment under control, were ready to break out at the first hint of weakness or defeat. Upon his return to Châtenay, Taine had found his family in mourning; he was also much fatigued by an over-rapid journey, and, added to his anxiety on behalf of his country, he had the vexation of knowing that his work on Germany must be indefinitely postponed.

So uneasy was he rendered by the news from the frontier that during the latter part of July he went into Paris every afternoon for news, only to be saddened by the noisy demonstrations of the boulevards, the coarse Chauvinism of the officials and the impudent flippancy of some of the newspapers. Nearly all his personal friends, with the editors of the *Débats* and the *Temps*—newspapers of standing—were, however, as despondent as himself. There was no doubt that by business men, by hard-working men, the declaration of war was considered imprudent and calamitous.

Alarming news soon began to penetrate the network of official falsehood. The events of Wissembourg and Reichshoffen opened the eyes of the most optimistic, and on hearing of these disasters Taine resolved to return to Paris with his family, there to suffer what was to befall in common with his fellow-citizens.

In spite of his defective eyesight he even sought to be

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enrolled among the National Guard, but his health was so weak at the time that the army doctor refused his application, advising him to leave Paris again at once.

Châtenay as a dwelling-place was no longer possible, standing as it would in case of siege directly between the hostile lines and the fire of the fort at Châtillon. By the end of August the district was deserted, even the Red Cross Association refusing the Taines' offer of their house and personal services.

Madame Taine and the other ladies of the family were finally taken to Tours, where Monsieur Libon, a relative of hers, was to undertake the direction of the postal service under Monsieur Steinacker.

The siege of Paris was one of the saddest periods of Taine's life. He had no hope of success, no confidence in the government of Paris. His historical training warned him that although a defensive army could be formed from a population as numerous and brave as that of Paris, yet that in face of troops as well organized as were the Prussians victory could not well be anything but doubtful. Even the memory of the victories of the Republic caused no illusions in his mind. As a historian he was well acquainted with the divisions and the weakness of the enemy at that period, as also with the fierce enthusiasm of the French soldiery ; and, as he well knew, that period had passed.

During the first few weeks of his exile at Tours Taine made the acquaintance of two young members of the Diplomatic Service,—Delaroche-Vernet and Albert Sorel, who afterwards became his intimate friends. It was through them that he was introduced to Monsieur de

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Chaudordy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and it was due to this introduction that he wrote two important articles destined for the English press, which were translated at Tours under his personal supervision, and afterwards published in volume form.

It was necessary that the European powers, severely critical as they were of French weaknesses and French reverses, should have some notion of the point of view of French diplomacy.

At the request of M. de Chaudordy Taine also wrote some pamphlets, which were to be translated into German and distributed or thrown from balloons among the German soldiery ; these pamphlets have since been published in different French and German periodicals.

During these troubled weeks Taine had the sad satisfaction of being at the headquarters of information. Certain scenes there witnessed impressed themselves strongly on his memory. The October day, for instance, when General Uhrich was presented to the populace of Tours by M. Cremieux at a window of the Archiepiscopal Palace, while Cardinal Guibert himself—fine-featured, resigned, urbane—stood modestly in the background of his own home.

Then, later on, Gambetta on a balcony of the Municipal Buildings announcing the victory of Coulmiers,—Gambetta—young, fiery and eloquent, confident of ultimate success, inspiring his auditors with his own hopeful ardour. Many a time later was Gambetta to be seen on that same balcony announcing victories that a dark and gloomy morrow was sternly to repudiate.

The hardest part of Taine's exile was still to come, how-

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ever. The foe was steadily advancing, and Tours was also threatened. It seemed useless to expose to danger the women and children of the party, and Taine was persuaded to make his way to Pau, where the climate was more favourable to the invalids and old folk under his care. But at Pau the absence of all news as to the progress of the war proved a heavy trial.

No information coming from French sources could at all be trusted ; all the papers lied, whether ignorantly or with design, and the official telegrams were hardly more to be depended on.

Delaroche-Vernet and Sorel, on their installation at Bordeaux, occasionally sent him copies of the *Times* or of the *Daily News*, and, thanks to these critical but trustworthy witnesses, Taine was enabled, at least in thought, to follow the desperate struggle in which his country was engaged.

He was still in weak health when he arrived at Pau, but in spite of all difficulty he set himself to continue the work that he had undertaken after his book on Germany was given up. This work was the editing of his notes on England. In a series of short notes he had recorded his impressions during several visits to England, and M. Templier, his editor and personal friend, had been so pleased with them that he had proposed to publish them just as they stood. Taine, however, had a high standard for the children of his pen, and he also desired to bring the notes up to date, as the earlier among them had been written twelve years previously.

Fortunately, the bookshops at Pau afforded him several English works on history and literature, as well as novels,

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so that in hours too sorrowful for original work, Taine had at least the resource of reading.

He was forced at length from the reserve he had always maintained upon political matters by the Armistice, by the surrender of Paris, and by the elections for the Assemblée Nationale. All these called urgently for serious consideration, and propounded problems not only as to peace, but as to necessary guidance into normal national life.

In the conflict between Jules Simon and Gambetta as to the decrees on electoral ineligibility, Taine entered the lists with spirit on behalf of his old friend and master, and drew up a protest against Gambetta's decree which found many signatures in Pau. The decree, however, was ultimately withdrawn.

On the conclusion of peace Taine returned to Paris as soon as possible, being anxious to finish his lectures at the École des Beaux-Arts, as he had accepted an invitation from the Taylor Institute at Oxford for a course of lectures on French Literature. This invitation had been made through Professor Max Müller. On March 12 therefore he re-entered Paris, going on from thence to Châtenay, where he found that the ravages of the war had been very serious.

Everything was being done to restore order when, with March 18, the insurrection of the Commune exposed France to new perils, new disasters.

To his Mother.

Châtenay, August 9, 1870.

You know the depressing news about the army; it is badly commanded, and as we have no tacticians, no

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real leader, the courage of the individual soldier goes for little. All I meet here are equally despondent; it is quite possible that the Prussians may reach Paris.

In this case we shall probably leave the country and return to Rue Vaneau and Rue Barbet-de-Jouy. Should a battle be lost near Metz we shall start at once, as it would not do to expose our wives to the mercies of a military occupation. . . . Many think that if the reverses continue there will be trouble in Paris—perhaps a revolution; some speak of demanding the Emperor's abdication, but in my opinion there is no possible leader for us; we have nothing but darkness before us; no one knows what things may come to; in any case strong public feeling is aroused against the Emperor and his government as responsible for the mismanagement. . . . All day long we are looking out for news. It is difficult to work; every one is gloomy and depressed; everywhere there is sorrow and mourning.

To his Mother.

Tours, August 28, 1870.

. . . We have just arrived at Tours, at the Hôtel de Bordeaux. M. Denuelle will probably join us on Monday. You will have heard that the Crown Prince is marching towards Paris; he may be outside the forts within six days.¹

Start at once, do not delay. Remember that the military decree recently announced allows the exclusion of useless mouths,—women in particular,—from Paris. Come and join us at Tours, and let me have a telegram so that

¹ This movement was prevented by the Emperor's retreat towards Sedan.

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I can order rooms. The train from Paris is crowded to-day ; one feels the danger to be imminent.

To Alexandre Denuelle.

Tours, August 30, 1870.

. . . Two hundred people were turned away from the hotel yesterday ; all the lodgings are occupied ; if we had not hastened we should have been roofless.

. . . Should MacMahon and Bazaine be defeated, the Prussians will return and I shall try to be useful to the wounded and to my country. It is a great trial to be refused admission among the National Guards. . . .

To his Mother.

Tours, September 2, 1870.

. . . Just now the exodus from Paris seems to be decreasing ; but if it recommences you will find no room in any of the hotels here or in any town of the west or south. A gentleman from Fontainebleau, with whom I was talking yesterday, told me that he and his wife, with their six children and four maids, had taken eighteen hours to reach Tours, and had spent the first night on the benches at the railway station, the second in an empty room, and the third on bare mattresses.

I have been introduced to the librarian . . . who is lending me some English books, and I shall set to work if possible. . . .

Our house at Châtenay runs some risk should we be defeated in the north,—where the most important engagements will take place. . . .

The English papers are unfavourable to us, and render us uneasy. We hear that MacMahon has started with

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250,000 men, and that we have 400,000 men in the north. Should this be the case, and should no great mistakes be made, we can hope for the best.

To his Mother.

Tours, September 4, 1870.

You have heard the terrible news. MacMahon wounded and defeated; 40,000 Frenchmen prisoners; the Emperor captured. The report is official. The enemy will be outside the walls of Paris within the next few days.

Start at once for here or Brest. Do not attempt Paris under any consideration; you know how the Prussians are burning and bombarding Strasbourg, and at Orsay there will be famine and confusion. For God's sake do not delay.

Monsieur Denuelle and I will probably return to Paris to try to be of use. . . . Like you, I am oppressed by anxiety, and if I were in Paris I could only do writing work in some office or another. My heart is too weak for me to go on active service. But I am wretched at having to be useless at a time of national danger.

To John Durand.

Tours, September 7, 1870.

. . . The enemy is just outside Paris. It costs me an effort to answer your letter; grief and anxiety weigh so heavily upon us that we spend the days doing nothing but looking out for news, reading the papers, and dreading the future. . . . Your newspapers are very hard upon us, which I regret, for your opinion has weight in the world. We hoped other things of you,—for France assisted at the birth of the United States, while Prussia has done nothing whatever for you.

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It is true that our Government seems to be the aggressor, and it is true that our Government has painfully mismanaged things; its imprudence has brought us into terrible calamity, and it well deserves its overthrow. Yet the real aggressor is he who made war inevitable for us. We had but 300,000 soldiers, Prussia 1,100,000. When you find four rifles aimed at you you have every right to fire your own, more especially when you know that a fifth is being raised against you. Prussia certainly meant to raise this extra weapon against us through her candidate for the Spanish succession. King William and Prince Bismarck, with their enormous army, the fanaticism they have roused among their people, their policy of annexation, and their violent measures, are playing precisely the rôle once taken by Napoleon I,—a rôle which will probably lead them, as it did Napoleon, on to ruin and execration, let Europe once recognize, as it did in 1815, that an ambitious, tyrannical and over-powerful neighbour is a common enemy.

The foolishness of our rulers is beyond all words. They knew absolutely nothing as to the strength of the Prussian army, and nothing of the national spirit of the Germans. Sooth to say, these Germans are infinitely more conceited than were the French of 1807. They believe themselves the chosen people,—their teachers have been proclaiming this doctrine to them for the last fifty years. They consider themselves divinely appointed to govern Europe, and what they call “the historical mission of Germany” has been entrusted to them, they imagine, on account of their superior virtues! You can have no idea as to the length they go in misconceiving and traducing the true French ideal.

THE WAR

When the war broke out I was in Dresden, studying the country, taking notes. Upon my return I wrote to an influential personage¹ saying that all the spirit of 1813 would be roused against us, that the war was most imprudent, and that all reflecting men were of my opinion. But we were in the hands of a gambler who made war his last stake and lost,—consequently we must also suffer.

I hope that we shall be able to offer you pot-luck when you come to Paris. My mother and all my people are well, though I myself am out of sorts and unable to do much.

. . . I hope that in your new surroundings you are happy and independent. There is nothing so good as life among trees and flowers. . . .

I have had an article sent to me from an American paper. It says that I am one-eyed, on the verge of complete blindness; also that I have just married the daughter of a wealthy butcher and that my wife has published a volume of verse. I hope that you do not believe these fine specimens of American fiction!

To his Mother.

Tours, October 15, 1870.

. . . The Prussians have taken Orleans and one of their detachments has crossed the Loire. Should they reach Blois I shall probably leave for Bordeaux, as they have been throwing bombs into Orleans, and exacting a tribute of eight millions under threats of pillage. I should be most uneasy about the ladies were this to take place here. However, they may possibly go on to Bourges. We have 100,000 men beyond the Loire; General Bour-

¹ Probably the Princess Matilde.

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baki has just come upon the scene, and our army is increasing,—so, as the Prussians have been twice checked outside Paris, there seems some hope for us.

According to what I hear on good authority they will find it difficult to bombard either Paris or the forts. Our naval artillery is destroying all their earthworks and preventing them from placing their cannon. . . . I have just written an address to the German soldiers which is to be printed both in French and German.

A letter has just reached me by balloon-post from my uncle Alexander, and dated October 1. He says that the arrangements are very good in Paris, and that they are well-provisioned. It appears that there are nine balloons ready to leave the city. The Government there is in communication with Paris by means of pigeons brought in the balloons—three pairs of birds in each balloon.

. . . The siege will certainly last another two months.

To his Mother.

Tours, November 4, 1870.

. . . No doubt you have heard of the troubles in Paris. I have some hopes of peace on account of the intervention of the Powers, and because of the election in Paris which took place yesterday and which will give Trochu and Favre an enormous majority. . . .

Gambetta and the others are discouraged, and feel that they will have to give way. Thiers has brought provincial news to Paris. . . .

There are 120,000 French in Le Mans, but the Prussians are too numerous and too well disciplined to give us any hope of a victory ; all our towns are being taken in turn. For the present we must resign ourselves to circumstances.

THE WAR

Peace depends on the good sense of the Parisians. . . .
Have courage,—we all need the help of our friends. . . .

November 13, 1870.

. . . The confusion is becoming universal. Russia has just denounced the Peace of 1856 and is about to invade Turkey and take Constantinople ; she has also formed an alliance with Prussia. England is being punished for her desertion of us. Austria means to make an effort against Russia, but I should think that she will probably find herself crushed and dismembered between the Prussians and the Russians, while England may have to see Constantinople,—the apple of her eye,—in the hands of Russia.

I have sent word by pigeon-post to Chevrillon about you all, but do not know whether the message has arrived. The separation from you all is terrible during these calamities. . . . The most reliable paper just now is the *Français*.

To Hector Malot.

Pau, November 16, 1870.

. . . I fear my letters will not arrive ; for the last ten days none of the pigeons has reached Paris ; either they are killed by the Prussians or they go astray. . . . I can offer you but little in exchange for your news, and what I tell you will probably be too late to be of interest, and will, perhaps, be contradicted. We hope great things of the army of the Loire. At (Coulmiers) on the ninth the Prussians lost 2,500 as prisoners, 8,000 men in all.

Our army numbered 110,000 men ; 60,000 were on the way to join it arriving either from Vierzon or Le Mans. Monsieur de Thann had about 80,000 men ; Prince Frederic

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Charles was bringing him 60,000 or 70,000. (All these statements I give on good authority.)

General X——, at Tours, who is well qualified to judge, and who was very pessimistic at the beginning of the war, stated in private conversation on his return from Orleans that he had full confidence that the artillery was good, the general cool and collected, that there was a good tone amongst the men, and that the position was most satisfactory; he hoped, in short, for our success should an attack be made by the Prussians. Trochu ought to have the fourteen or fifteen hundred cannon by this time that have been made since the war began, in order to carry out the overwhelming sortie which he is supposed to be contemplating. Such are our resources and our hopes. Personally, however, I know so little of politics and diplomacy that I feel merely like a passenger on some great ship . . . and can foresee nothing as to ultimate events. . . .

To his Mother.

Pau, November 19.

. . . It is a strange coincidence that I should be at Pau again after fifteen years. The town stands on a hill; our house is half-way up the slope, and our windows on one side look out on to a large park; from the other we can see above the houses the snowy peaks and gorges of the Pyrenees. The early morning sun shines into my room, and the valley is as green and sheltered as the country near Paris in September. Yet I am feeling our national sorrows so intensely that I have no real appreciation of the beautiful surroundings, which otherwise would give me so much pleasure. . . .

THE WAR

To M. Albert Sorel.

Pau, November 29, 1870.

. . . Describe a winter journey to the Pyrenees! It sounds tempting, but my mood for it is past, and it never does to repeat impressions. Be very sure of one thing, and that is that man has but a limited number of ideas in his head, and that he will do wisely in not over-drawing his account. I had, then, a certain personal interest in describing this part of the country, and he who is to do the work again must have something of the same sort to inspire him to the task. The same rule holds good in everything.

I have written a history of English literature, it therefore falls to some one else to write of French or Italian or Greek literature. A pattern should not be used twice. Had I but health and leisure I should write a treatise upon the Will,—to complete my work upon the Intellect, but my desire carries me no further. . . .

To Madame Taine, senior.

Pau, December 17, 1870.

I have tried in vain to start work once more,—sorrow and anxiety seem to sap my energy, and I read of a morning, go out in the afternoon, play dominoes in the evening,—just killing time. Once a week my young friends of the Embassy send me English papers with heartrending news,—it is quite evident that our French newspapers are misleading in every way. The battle lost at Orleans cost us 7,000 prisoners. It seems to me that any one at all able to judge soberly must give up all hope. The army of the Loire is not able to save Paris. Paris can do nothing for herself.

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To Madame Taine, senior.

Pau, December 25, 1870.

. . . You see that I was right in persuading you to leave Tours. It has been bombarded by the Prussians, with much damage and loss of life. Madame Libon insisted on remaining there, despite her son's entreaties, and as yet we have had no news of her.

. . . At all events, even should we be defeated, our honour will have been saved. France will have proved herself capable of resistance and of organization. She will be more respected in future, and it will not be so easy to try to treat her as a Poland. She will not be looked upon as an easy prey, as would have been the case if we had yielded at once after Sedan. But at what cost of life and gold will this compensation for a prolonged defence be gained ! . . .

To Madame Taine, senior.

Pau, January 11, 1871.

I understand your anxiety on hearing that the forts are being bombarded, but fortunately till now the Prussian missiles do not seem to be doing us much harm, and Trochu will probably make a sortie. Apparently the Prussians have not dared to risk delay. Fearing our provincial army, they want to force on the capitulation of Paris. Another evidence of this is that they are calling out the last reserves of their Landwehr and have evacuated Dijon and Langres. Bourbaki has just had a great success in Doubs, near Belfort, which may perhaps be saved. Paris, having had three months in which to complete her fortifications, has a chance of being able to resist attack, and if Bourbaki and Faidherbe continue their advance

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upon the east it is possible that the Prussians may decide to raise the siege, in order not to be cut off from Germany. This is the optimistic view, but I am so ignorant of warfare that I do not trust my own impressions.

Life is sad. I cannot get up any vigour for my work, which is making no progress. . . .

To Madame Taine, senior.

Pau, January 27, 1871.

. . . I can make no conjecture as to the future. It seems clear to me that Paris can neither be helped nor help herself. The town is provisioned for, perhaps, another two months,—will the Prussian artillery be strong enough to force the gates? Even should Paris be taken, I think the war will go on. Our only chance seems to be the death of the old king by a stray shot, or the death of the Czar and the succession of his son, who hates the Germans and may help us.

In case of the war being continued, is Brest in danger? I hope not,—it is too out of the way, and the Prussians have no navy. In any case I believe it is well defended from the land side. Make full inquiries about this, and in any case, should you be in need of me, I will go to you in Brest. All the foreign papers are admiring our prolonged resistance. It is certain that our honour is safe, and that we have the sympathies of Europe, though sympathy of the negative order.

To his Mother.

Pau, February 4.

. . . The army has surrendered, but remains in Paris, so it will not be removed to Germany. . . .

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Gambetta has issued an undesirable electoral law; it will probably be passed owing to Bismarck's unfortunate intervention. Under these circumstances what will the Chamber be like! All hope is lost since Bourbaki's defeat; if he continues the war it will be in defiance of common sense, we shall only have to forfeit more land and more money. Marcelin and his mother have been ill at Toulouse, with no servants and almost penniless. The more people I meet, the more grateful I feel for our own escape from utter ruin or from death.

To Madame Taine, senior.

Pau, February 7, 1871.

The Prussians are preventing any one from entering Paris. They allow a few to leave the town, but only very few. . . .

Yesterday we gave in our votes for the Paris elections. We are glad that Gambetta has given way,¹ and so avoided civil war for the present. . . .

To M. Emile Planat.

Pau, February 7, 1871.

. . . I am finishing my notes upon England. My lack of books of reference accounts for the gaps. I shall write nothing upon Germany. My journey was suddenly interrupted last July, and our feelings towards that country are now such that for the next ten years I am convinced no Frenchman will want to see it or write about it. . . . It seems to me that the Germans want to deal with France just as Austria did with Italy between 1815 and 1848,

¹ Gambetta had just withdrawn an unpopular proposal for the electoral law.

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that is to say, to make it a country to be invaded at pleasure and entirely under their thumb. Perhaps through force of misery and humiliation we shall end by organizing ourselves against them as they did against us in 1813, or perhaps by dint of successes and victories they will end with the fate of Napoleon I. I see no other outlook.

. . . Our great national fault is our demand for amusement. The art of self-boredom has given Germany its strength. The German has carried out all the long monotonous tasks that no Frenchman would undertake. On the other hand, the war has shown up an evil side of Germany that civilization had been trying to conceal. The Teutonic animal is fundamentally hard, brutal and despotic, and the German animal is grasping and miserly as well.

. . . I am working, but at the cost of great exertion, and with very slow progress. If I should have to begin life over again, my writing will not suffice to support my family, and in case there should be no chance for me in Paris I mean to look out for a post as professor or lecturer in Switzerland. But in two months' time I shall be forty-three years of age, and though I have the will, my keenness has abated.

We learn to-day that Gambetta has yielded, and that civil war is averted,—one evil the less,—but the Prussian demands are enormous, and will probably be rejected by the Assembly. In this case we shall be conquered, and the Napoleons possibly restored, which will certainly mean civil war,—things will be with us as with Italy in the sixteenth century. It won't bear thinking of. My mind has worn mourning for the last six months. . . .

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To Madame Taine, senior.

Pau, February 12.

I insist upon your not starting just yet. . . . The railways are only being used for the transport of provisions, and two passports are necessary. There seems hope of peace to-day,—in fact, the chances are three to one in favour of it. Paris is most unhealthy, especially for women and children. There have been four to five thousand deaths per week lately, and in the neighbourhood the dead have been buried in the very shallowest of graves.

The Assembly is mostly composed of Moderates, a good many Orleanists, some Legitimists, and a fair number of Republicans of the Cavaignac persuasion. In my opinion, should peace be made, the chances are in favour of a moderate Republic of more or less length of duration, which will glide quietly into a constitutional monarchy under the Orleanists. The Reds are discredited in Paris, their numbers are too insignificant. The only danger will lie in the discontent of the sixty or eighty thousand people who have been fed gratuitously during the siege, and who will now find themselves without work and without bread.

To Max Müller.

Pau, March 1, 1871.

. . . Pray pardon my delay in replying to your letter of February 17, which I only received on the 28th. The project of which you write is most flattering; I regard it as a great honour.

The six or seven lectures would be given in French. In my opinion the most suitable subject would be a study of the French stage of the seventeenth century,—Corneille,

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Racine, Molière. This would give opportunity for a critical treatment less in vogue in England than in France, a study of the way in which the ages have conceived of the principal types of human society, such as the king, the father, the husband, the daughter, the subject, the noble, etc.

If I read your letter rightly, these lectures are to be given in Oxford before the members of the University. Can the course be completed within the space of three weeks? As to the date, I hope to be at liberty by the end of May and during the month of June. . . .

To Emile Boutmy.

Pau, March 6, 1871.

. . . On August 26 we got up an ambulance corps at Châtenay, and then all at once came orders to evacuate the place. The mayor, the forester, the baker—all departed, and on the arrival of the enemy the village was deserted. We then spent nearly three months at Tours;—I was there with my mother, my wife, my sister, my niece, my daughter, my wife's grandmother and a cousin. This battalion of ladies was commanded by my father-in-law and myself. On Tours being threatened by the enemy, my sister, niece and my mother went to stay with my sister, Madame Chevrillon, at Brest, while the rest of the party came on here. Whilst at Tours I wrote a little for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and have also been engaged on a work entitled *Notes sur l'Angleterre*.

You know that my ideas on France have always been greyly pessimistic. The grey has now turned to black; I foresee a whole year of anarchy and civil strife, then a second invasion, possibly then the severing of France into

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two hostile parts,—a condition of affairs such as Italy has been passing through during the last three centuries. The stupidity of the newspapers is tremendous,—I should imagine few nations as remarkable for political incapacity,—and those here who call themselves Republicans and Progressives are mostly as mad as they can be. In short, we have no leaders, and are driven at haphazard by our interests or by our fears. . . .

To Max Müller.

Paris, March 15, 1871.

. . . I shall be very glad to have further particulars and advice from you as to my audience and as to the subjects it is proposed to treat. I presume that my audience will consist mainly of the Oxford undergraduates conversant with the French language. The seventeenth century French drama suggests itself to me as a suitable subject, rich in interest, and well known through our three great dramatists.

I should rather hesitate to treat of our philosophers and moralists,—Descartes, Malebranche, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère,—my objection being that to escape superficial treatment, such a theme would demand a close study of metaphysical and moral theories. . . . Everything depends upon the audience,—the lectures must be made appropriate. . . .

To his Wife.

Paris, March 17, 1871.

Sceaux and Châtenay are in a terrible condition—pig-styes and worse. . . . Everywhere broken or burnt furniture, shattered window panes, . . . indescribable hor-

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rors. It will take time to clean and disinfect. The Prussian commander says they will be leaving the place on the 19th, and that they will give us back the house intact. It is to be hoped that this will be the case. Dr. Curie arrived yesterday. He has no good words for Trochu, Favre, etc. "Incapable, perhaps also treacherous," is his opinion of them. He also thinks that the Paris army could well have beaten back the assailants, but that the men were always called back and the retreat sounded. Chevrillon does not think the same.

M. Guillaume came to see us yesterday. My lectures have been postponed for another week, as the immense quantity of wood and earth which had been put into the amphitheatre to protect Delaroche's fresco has not yet been carted away.

Renan has lent me four long articles on the political situation, which he will probably not publish. They are not very good—too abstract,—he does not make the most of himself. He has plenty of ideas, but his argument would not attract; he is clearly for the restoration of royalty and aristocracy,—the better to follow the example of Prussia.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNE

March 18—Taine's Opinion on the Insurrection—Visit to England—Lectures at Oxford—Correspondence

THE preceding letters show the gloomy view that Taine took of the state of matters in France. During the few days he spent in Paris he noted the popular excitement and the extent of social confusion, and was but too well prepared to see the outbreak of insurrection on March 18.

The hostility of Frenchmen towards one another under the eyes of their country's foe, he considered an unpardonable national crime. The stern and repressive measures taken during that week of bloodshed, while filling him with horror and with pity, he yet considered necessary against parricides and renegades. The war over, Taine could never bring his mind to renew his former relations with German friends, and in this way one or two old and valued friendships were broken;—he loved France too well to pardon her enemies. A like sentiment angered him against the Communists, tempered by a deeper grief. They had, in his opinion, added the crime of disloyalty to that of breaking the laws of civilization; his historical training had made him realize the efforts and the sacrifices

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needed to build up a firm state of society, and it was painful to him to watch the work of fifty generations of patient and devoted labour,—a precious heirloom which should have been handed on intact to posterity,—thus being destroyed by the ambition and the folly of a few individuals. “Each one of us should bear his part in the building,” Taine used to say sometimes,—“One a finely cut stone, another his grain of sand. The essential matter is for each to accomplish his task and to labour at the work according to his strength.” He was very modest as to his own labours, and regarded the humblest of workers as his peer, but he considered as public enemies those who attempt to destroy the fortress in which humanity has taken shelter.

During the gloomy days that followed the outbreak of anarchy, Taine lived just outside Paris with his sister, Madame Letorsay, and went regularly into town to hear the news and give his lectures at the École des Beaux-Arts. These went on until April 3; then, however, communications having become difficult and dangerous, there was a risk of being attacked by the insurgents, and the audience having dwindled down to a few foreigners, M. Emile Guillaume decided that the lectures should be given up.

Taine’s relations had left Pau about the middle of March, and had once more sought refuge in Tours until they should be able to return to Châtenay, and having nothing more to do in Paris he spent the next few weeks with them before his departure for Oxford, which he reached May 24, after a difficult journey. His first Oxford lecture was given two days later, before a most sympathetic

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audience.¹ . . . At the beginning of the war, misled by appearances, the English had indeed blamed France as the aggressor, but they had now come to a better understanding of matters, and were maintaining delicately balanced relations between the hostile parties. A further evidence of this was given by the university authorities in conferring the title of D.C.L. upon M. Taine and Canon Döllinger² simultaneously.

¹ Taine delivered six lectures in Oxford, his subject being Corneille, Racine, and Society under Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

His first lecture touched upon the general laws of Drama and its expression of the dominant feelings of the period. He also mentioned Euripides in connexion with Greek gods and heroes, and the corresponding Athenian characters of 420 B.C. Lope and Calderon were also dealt with, and the leading men in Spain of the seventeenth century, and the *Voyage* of Madame d'Aulnoy, and the Letters of Madame de Villars.

The second lecture treated of the prominent young heroes and cavaliers depicted by Corneille and actually existing during the time of Louis XIII and the Fronde. Taine drew largely upon Memoirs for this theme.

The third lecture was devoted to the ladies and the veterans of the day.

In the fourth he dwelt upon the private lives and characters of Corneille and Racine, proving that they were well qualified to describe those two different aspects of society. He also compared the young men under Louis XIV with their portraiture by Racine.

The fifth lecture dealt with the idea of the King, as seen in Racine and in Louis XIV. The confidants of Racine and the courtiers of Louis XIV were thus connected.

In the last address the ideals of Society were found to be those drawn by Racine, the art of eloquence and perfect diction being particularly prominent, as also the delight in delicate and discreet heroism of conduct.

² Canon Jean-Joseph Döllinger was a well-known Bavarian theologian (1799-1890), who as leader of the Old Catholic party in Germany had conducted a strong polemic against the Papal claims of Infallibility. The independence of his religious views had gained him the sympathies of the Protestants and also of the Anglicans.

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Early in June Taine returned to Châtenay, where his family had just arrived, and there resumed his quiet hard-working life.

To Madame H. Taine.

March 19, 4 p.m.

A new Government is installed at the Hôtel de Ville, and is calling the citizens to new communal elections. These upstarts are quite unknown, with the exception of Assi, the workman from Creusot, and Lullier, the mad naval lieutenant. The Assembly and all the ministers are at Versailles with some troops. No news comes of them,—the insurgents have probably cut the communications.

The streets are barricaded around Montmartre and the Hôtel de Ville, but the rest of the town is quiet. . . .

March 20, 1 p.m.

The confusion is complete, the country is in a state of anarchy. The cause of the present condition of affairs is the extraordinary bitterness that even the more enlightened among Parisians bear against Trochu, etc., whom they look upon as traitors. The Assemblée Nationale is almost as unpopular. At the time of writing, no one seems to have any notion of obeying constituted authority, the siege has turned all heads. The papers, however, with the exception of the *Rappel*, the *Patriote* and some others, are on the side of the Assembly. . . .

Orsay, March 20, Evening.

I am utterly depressed. I seem to be living amongst madmen, with the Prussian and his policeman's truncheon

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to keep them in order. I am too saddened to feel actual indignation.

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, March 21.

You probably know the political situation better than I do. I spoke to some people in the train who were coming from Paris. The Assembly holds its own and has 50,000 to 60,000 troops at command. Seine-et-Oise is in a state of siege . . . and declares that there is great urgency for settlement of the law on communal elections. There are hopes of compromise, and several of the National Guard begin to realize their mistakes. However, the barricades are being augmented in Paris, and there is great disorder. Some of the men of the National Guard have no bread and go round begging. They have occupied the forts. . . .

I have just returned from Châtenay, which the Germans evacuated yesterday. The furniture has been ill-used ; the books in my study seem to be intact, though disarranged. We have opened all the doors and windows in order to air the house, and we shall have to disinfect the rooms. . . . I hear that very few men and horses have been buried in the neighbourhood. Châtenay is becoming once more populated.

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, March 24.

I went to Paris yesterday to try to find some letters from you. . . . One is overwhelmed with despair when one reads the papers and when one enters Paris. . . .

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There has been bloodshed and there will probably be more. No one can suggest any remedy ; perhaps the best thing would be for the Assembly to announce an election for the Municipal Commission, and this as soon as possible, for the rioters of the Hôtel de Ville are announcing one for Sunday.

The central part of Paris (the Bank, the Exchange, St. Germain-l'Auxerrois) is occupied by trustworthy troops, which are defending the Mairies from the insurgents. But they are outnumbered, and can be overwhelmed at any moment. Lullier, the madman, has been nominated Commander-General of the National Guard. Such a leader may risk anything. Our part of the town is the most quiet, and will be, I think, the least exposed. . . .

To Alexandre Denuelle.

Orsay, March 25, 1871.

. . . The troops by the Bourse are threatened by the insurgents. . . . There is still great danger. . . . Five cart-loads of manure have been removed from our house at Châtenay, and there are still two more. . . . Very little has been injured, but my clothes have all been taken. . . .

The bodies of the men and horses buried here and there have been covered with more earth. I advise that English grass should be sown upon it. . . . The village is in a better sanitary condition, and about a hundred people have returned. . . . All this would be done much more quickly if it were not for the troubles in Paris, which deprive us of directions from the Hôtel de Ville.

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To Madame H. Tainé.

Orsay, March 26.

. . . I await Act the Third with a second invasion and a Prussian prefect in Paris, and there are many people who would accept the latter, preferring Moltke to Lullier, Assi and Co.

Until March 18, after scoffing at us as weak and foolish, Europe could at least pity the extent of our sufferings; now she has every right to despise us,—and she despises us accordingly. There seems no sense of right left among us, only an exasperated vanity which attacks our own leaders instead of the enemy. . . .

It is hard to think ill of one's country. I feel as if I were condemning a near and dear relation,—but—I can only consider her either criminal or insane. . . . Thiers can venture upon nothing, not being able to trust the soldiery. Admiral Saisset and the mayors have yielded everything,—it means a relapse into barbarism. . . .

To Madame H. Tainé.

Paris, March 28.

The *Débats* expects to be suppressed, and proposes a move to Versailles. This morning Blanqui's Reds gained the day in seventeen arrondissements, and their papers are denouncing Tirard as a reactionary. You can imagine the tendencies of the new municipal authorities. . . . Many things convince me that the Assembly at Versailles cannot count at all upon the troops ostensibly there to defend it. . . . However, the ruling power will probably not last more than three weeks. The question of payments at the end of the month may prove

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to be embarrassing. Who, then, is to succeed in office? The Assembly, the Prussians, or the Bonapartes? I am in such a state of silent anger and despair that it is an effort to speak or to write. . . . But do not be uneasy on my account. The neighbourhood here is quiet, the omnibuses have started running again. . . . A lady with whom I travelled lately, owner of the Château de Bel-Air at Bièvres, estimates her damages at a hundred and fifty thousand francs. All her pictures, jewels, art treasures, wines and house linen have been stolen, and thousands of her trees cut down.

To Madame H. Taine.

March 28, Evening.

Still the same state of things. I have just come from the office of the *Journal*, where we have been comparing notes. We have heard the names of several of the new members,—Bergeret, Eudes, Assi, Billioray, Ranc, Tolain, Malon, Vallès, Grousset and others. Fanatics and failures,—such are our leaders. . . . The principle of the electors seems to have been: “Well-known and well-proven men have governed us as badly as possible, Let us now try another method and choose unknown men,—at any rate they cannot do worse.” We calculate that with five hundred thousand francs a day for the maintenance of the National Guard and with other expenses they will need a million per day. The question is how they mean to get it. . . . At the *Journal* office I met Hector Malot, Villetard, Alloury and Bapst. Malot has been with Bourbaki’s forces, and has been down with small-pox. At present he is putting his house at Fontenay-sous

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Bois in order. Bourbaki's men have been dying in heaps, exhausted in the snow. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, March 31.

. . . Something serious will probably occur to-morrow. It is quite possible that the twenty-five battalions of the Commune may attack Versailles, as they are reckoning on the defection of the troops.

When I reached here at six o'clock this evening, I heard from Fluy and Pont that at Versailles they appeared quite unsuspecting. I went at once to the Brigadier of the Police, who, as I hope, will take a letter from me to Jules Simon. M. Breton had despatched a man to Versailles during the afternoon, but as the trains were no longer running and the man was on foot, we do not know if he has arrived. At any rate, I hope that other warnings have reached Versailles, and that it will not be taken by surprise.

The Comité has no more money; they have stolen the funds of the five large insurance companies, and a hundred and fifty thousand people have left Paris. I shall not go into Paris on Monday unless I can feel sure of safe return. It is already certain to-day that the northern line is barred.

The development of the situation will cause the Communists to close Paris within the next few days and seize the rich as hostages. They are now holding the Crédit Foncier. The red flag is flying everywhere; should the insurgents succeed to-morrow and disperse the Assembly, the Prussians will be in Paris within the week, and worse still, they will be hailed as deliverers from a reign of terror.

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To M. Denuelle.

Orsay, April 3, 1871.

. . . At ten o'clock yesterday morning we heard firing.
. . . At six in the evening I heard that there had been an unexpected engagement and that the insurgents had been put to flight by the fire from Mont Valérien, and were returning in disorder to the Champs Elysées. They have placed ten mitrailleuses at Courbevoie, expecting an attack to-day. . . . The surgeon of the Gendarmes was taken prisoner; several wounded marines were driven back to Versailles. . . .

The trains begin to run once more. . . . I shall give my lecture in Paris this morning, as I feel in honour bound to be at my post unless prevented by actual illness. . . . To-morrow I shall settle down again at Châtenay. It is advisable that the house should be occupied. Should affairs remain unsatisfactory, it seems certain that the Prussians will take up their old positions, and they only respect places actually tenanted by the owners.

I shall also be able to work there, as I can have my books.

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, April 3.

. . . There was no defection at Versailles. At four in the afternoon the town was quiet and cheerful, welcoming the returning sailors. All day long the cannon growled from the heights of Châtillon, Clamart, and probably also from Le Petit-Bicêtre. Mont Valérien, which was in our hands, scattered the insurgents . . . in disorder back to Paris.

. . . One meets the National Guards by twos and threes

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all over Paris ; some carrying several guns and all looking discomfited, with very long faces. Between Sceaux-Ceinture and Bourg-la-Reine they were seen in bands, several women among them who act the part of inspiring furies.

. . . I think that Paris will yield within a week. Rumour speaks of ten to thirty thousand prisoners among the National Guards, and of a great massacre by the fire of Mont Valérien. The Commune, however, still issues violent decrees. Thiers and the ministers are impeached and their goods sequestered ; the Religious Worship Budget is suppressed, and the properties of the religious corporations confiscated. All that they do will cast discredit on the Republic for ever. Their newspapers,—*La Montagne* in particular,—demand the guillotine. However, the omnibuses begin to run again in Paris, the railways are open, and ladies and children are again seen in the streets.

I shall not give any lecture on Friday. In a few days' time I am going to settle down at Châtenay.

I have had no letter from you for three days. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, April 4.

. . . No letters from you as yet ; they have been delayed in Paris or remain at Versailles. . . . I hope you are getting mine. I have just come from Châtenay . . . no posts there,—everything is disorganized. Notices posted up in the railway stations announce that from to-day no able-bodied man will be allowed to leave Paris, and that no tickets will be issued. . . .

The insurgents have taken command of the public

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funeral treasury. They are making house to house visitations, and forcing the moderates of the National Guard into their service. The clergy are also suffering at their hands, and the Jesuit House, in the Rue des Postes, has been seized. Assi, who wished to compromise with the Assembly, has been imprisoned. Their forces are estimated at a hundred and twenty thousand . . . and at least eighty thousand at Versailles, this number increasing daily as the army comes back from Metz. All are very irritated and resolute, and announce that they mean to strike hard. Three thousand five hundred of the National Guard are prisoners at Versailles. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, April 5.

No letters yet; they are promised, but who can count upon promises!—I only hope that mine reach you. . . .

All day long the cannon have been growling, and all last night as well; it has now been going on for sixty hours; apparently between Vanves and Châtillon. I am told that the troops hold their own splendidly, the insurgents can hardly manage their cannon and the soldiers jeer and do not take the trouble to be on their guard against them. . . . Nearly all the men I meet have been through the siege; the general impression is always the same. The Parisians have their heads turned by the newspapers and their own vanity, and are convinced that they can not only defend themselves but crush the Germans too;—their failures they ascribe to the treachery of their leaders, and it is impossible to bring them to any other view. As to the insurrection, it is based on socialistic ideas. “Our employers, the citizens, have been taking advantage of us.

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Let us do away with the employer. There is no such thing as superiority. We workmen are quite able to be leaders, magistrates and generals if we wish to be so. As we happen to have guns, let us use them to found a republic where workmen like ourselves can be ministers and presidents." They are going on now because they fear Cayenne should they be defeated. There are many foreigners among them.

. . . Châtenay seemed very forlorn yesterday. Much time and much of the money that is not forthcoming will be needed to repair the damage. Such misery everywhere ! And the woods so beautiful—full of anemones and other flowers, and the birches green already !

The cannonading stopped at half-past four this afternoon.

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, April 6.

. . . Talking with an artilleryman, I said that the insurgents were as bad as the Prussians. "Far worse, sir," was his answer. . . .

Versailles looks like the Boulevard Montmartre on a fine Sunday ; the cafés and restaurants are crammed. . . .

The insurgents are playing high. De Guerry (curé of the Madeleine) and the Archbishop have been arrested ; the Collège Rollin has been plundered, the houses of Favre, Picard, Thiers and Rochefort are threatened. Disorder, however, is great amongst them. At Neuilly, Levasseur saw guards bivouacking without tents, and they had not been relieved for four days. . . .

To-morrow I will tell you of my political conversation with Guillaume Guizot ; there are possibilities of fusion and liberal Legitimity accepted by the Orleanists.

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Two francs are paid by everyone leaving Paris ; it is a fiscal measure. Only one railway is being used, that of the Nord, by order of the Prussians. . . .

Madame About is at Saverne with her children ; About is at Versailles. He has left the *Soir*. Every morning he goes to see Thiers ; and his wish is to be made a prefect or an ambassador, even were it in Persia. . . .

Orsay, April 7.

Cannonading still in the distance to-day, probably near Issy or near Vanves ; we have no papers and might be shut up in some hole ; it will be your turn to give me some political news. The weather is exquisite, its beauty seems an irony. But I must not dwell on gloomy topics ; here is my promised summary of the conversation yesterday.

The Legitimists sent a deputation lately to the Prince de Joinville to sound him as to his views. He said (I am giving his own words) : “ If I had the crown of France within my hands, and if the Comte de Paris and the Duc de Bordeaux stood before me, I should place it on the head of the Duc de Bordeaux.”

The Duc d'Aumale agreed with this sentiment. They then added, “ Such is our own private opinion, but we are not the leaders of our party. We can but express our preferences.”

For the present the programme formulated by Thiers is insisted upon, viz. : reorganization, civil peace, payment to Germany, and no party strife for any particular form of government. . . . The impression still holds that the present Chamber is less reactionary than the provinces. . . . The Legitimists, on their arrival at Versailles and under the influences of Paris, become

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remarkably moderate. Nearly all claim an extension of privilege. The trimmers are trying for the following compromise, viz. : the making of all necessary electoral and municipal laws, and on the completion of the edifice, Henry V. as keystone, supported by the Orleanists as his heirs and chief officers of state. . . . As to the constitution, they claim two Chambers,—the Upper House elective, not hereditary,—the members to be chosen by the corporations, university, clergy, magistrates, Institute, chambers of commerce, and general consuls. This Upper House to consist of but five hundred members, the two hundred and fifty seats of the Lower House offering hope of a seat to such deputies as have not been re-elected.

My own objection is the clerical, absolutist and Austrian education of the Duc de Bordeaux. It is met by the view that he would be bound by the preliminary laws and by the collaboration of the Orleanists. This argument is based upon there being four parties in France, and the necessity of a combination between two of these parties in order to steer clear of the demagogue and the Bonaparte.

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, April 8.

Yesterday and to-day I drove out with Letorsay. The country is exquisite, of the most delicate green, with the tenderest of suns. But the cannonading still goes on,—it only ceased at two o'clock to-day,—and prevents me from appreciating the beauty of such things. I only see them with my outward eye. . . . I was talking to a science teacher and to an old artist to-day. Both were inclined to side with the insurgents. This point of view always

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puzzles me: I cannot understand any man of intelligence having such a feeble idea of right and justice. After having carefully directed the conversation I arrive at the following conclusions.

Firstly, that the guiding principle of such minds must be a strong egoism. The painter said, for instance, "I do not wish to obey any one; no one has the right to command me, be it King, magistrate or Parliament; our Deputies are nothing but our servants."

And in 1848 the more violent papers told the people that the Deputies were merely their clerks.

My second conclusion is that in difficult questions, as those of Government, society, political constitution, the intelligence of the average Frenchman is at fault. His point of view is limited; he is content with windy eloquence; he prides himself on his incompetence, and does not even realize the delicacy and the abstruseness of the question. And in default of political intelligence, he has not the political instinct of the Englishman or of the Northerner in general.

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, April 9.

. . . It appears that the insurgents have been commandeering goods in the neighbourhood of Sceaux and pressing able-bodied men into their service. . . . The submission of Paris is but a question of time. . . . The Princess Matilde has been refusing presents,—Sèvres vases, etc.,—saying that she wished to have nothing in her house that she had not paid for with her own money. . . .

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To his Mother.

Tours, April 17.

. . . Everyone is flying from Paris, where people are being forced to join the insurgents and where bombs are coming down like hail. . . . I am far from considering that things will be settled in a week.

The General at the École Polytechnique was telling me to-day that the southern forts cannot be taken unless crushed by the artillery. There is no possibility of that as yet; people are reckoning on defection or on being able to buy an entrance; even then it would mean a terrible battle inside Paris; the insurgents have very resolute leaders, two of them—Rossel and Dombrowski—very capable. They have had time to make their preparations, they have all the necessary ammunition; they know that they are fighting for their lives, and the pillage of the wealthy houses is acting as a stimulant. One cannot in the least foresee where we shall be a month from now.

To his Mother.

Tours, April 30.

I am very glad that none of us remains in Paris; it is a regular pandemonium. The mother of a lady here, who was going out very simply dressed, was railed at by a street fury the other day,—“Down with the dressed-up aristocrats! you shall soon be brought low!”

I do not think that the insurgents have more than forty thousand men disposed to fight, the others are all enrolled by force; but their leaders are fanatics, cosmopolitans, foreigners, rascals who risk anything for the sake of general Jacquerie. The *Français*, the *Gaulois* will tell you all

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that I can. We are rather uneasy about our flat, as the Communists threaten to occupy it. In case of need, we have written to Lameire, through Libon, to get him to instal the workmen of my father-in-law. We must cultivate patience and resignation.

I have prepared a good deal for my Oxford lectures ; the library here has been very useful. I feel rather nervous, though, at the thought of lecturing before English people. A strange audience, imperfectly acquainted with the language, may not easily understand the delicate shades of meaning that I shall need to dwell upon. . . .

To his Mother.

Tours, May 5.

. . . There are twelve gendarmes in our little house at Châtenay, with two of their wives and twelve horses. The Governor says that they have orders to do no damage ; the village is a sort of headquarters.

Orders have been issued in Paris for all householders, whether absent or not, to pay the dues for 1870 and 1871. . . .

According to despatches our troops have taken the Moulin-Sacquet, which indicates the speedy capture of the Hautes-Bruyères, from whence they can best fire on Châtenay. In this case I may have to go back to look after the house and to try to get my clothes from Paris. Nothing, however, can be arranged definitely beforehand. I reckon on starting for Oxford about the twentieth, but may have to delay and put off the lectures till November.

I must confess that the uncertainty depresses me. I can hardly rouse myself ; I read at the Bibliothèque, and have made some friends, but anxiety and sorrow

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are always haunting me. I eat and sleep well, but my beard has grown grey. I should like to be ten years younger, now that I have a family to support and that the future is so uncertain. However, one must be resigned to circumstances. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Orsay, May 17.

. . . The trees on the high road have been cut down, and there are many traces of the devastations of the war, but much has been repaired. . . . Within the last six weeks, doors and windows have been replaced, and the village of Châtenay begins again to look as it did before the war. . . . The grass has grown again nearly everywhere; all the trees are green or blossoming, and the air delicious. . . .

You can have the house as soon as you wish, but you must let the gendarmes have a few days' notice. . . .

May 18.

. . . We were much alarmed yesterday by a terrible explosion, and it was rumoured that the fort at Vanves had been blown up; however, it was a powder-magazine belonging to the insurgents near the Trocadéro. What will have become of Madame Seillières' house! And your Hélène too! The bombs are falling on the Boulevard Malesherbes;—have you any news of her? . . .

I have been thinking over my summer's work this morning, and am strongly inclined to write on *La France Contemporaine*. I will give you my reasons fully on my return. If I can enter into the subject satisfactorily, it will afford some compensation for our gloomy winter.

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The Comte de Chambord's letter¹ had no good effect. He is too old, and too clerically disposed. . . .

Versailles, May 19.

I write this in all haste at Renan's. I start in half an hour.

The explosion yesterday was in the Avenue Rapp. Two or three houses were destroyed. The Champs de Mars is covered with bullets; the windows must all be broken.

The best authorities believe that Paris will be entered by Sunday. The Place Vendôme will be taken easily, but Montmartre with its fanatics and twenty thousand foreigners (including seven thousand English) will hold out to the end, and will bombard the neighbourhood. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

London, May 20.

Arrived this morning. A calm crossing, pretty country,—wooded and hilly right up to London. In the railway carriage there were five or six men who began card wagers from 100 up to 1,000 francs. One pocketed three or four thousand francs in the hour. They gained or lost superbly, truly English in stolidity of manner and zest for combat. And then they began talking of the scenery!

. . . Called to-day on Mr. Haye, Dean Stanley, Lord Houghton, Grant Duff, and Arthur Russell. No one at home. Saw my publisher—Reeve;—the translation of my study on *Intelligence* appears to-morrow.

Naturally here in London I have fallen victim to the spleen, it is due to the local colouring.—My impressions are the same as I had before.—A colossal city of enormous

¹ To Monsieur de Carayon-Latour, May 8, 1871.

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wealth, and with ragged beggars going about barefoot with little twists of paper to protect their sore toes. Mean alleys at the back of sumptuous streets, massive trees and beautiful verdure in streets full of sooty fog that chokes up one's throat and nose. All this being no longer new to me I find no longer instructive, nor even interesting. I am tired, and long passionately for books and quiet home life. You can well imagine that a visit to London does not satisfy this craving. I have just spent an hour and a half in a quiet corner of St. James' Park, stretched on two chairs. I promise myself but one pleasure, which will be a very simple and very inexpensive one, and that is *not* to go and see the Exhibition. In my present state of mind any sort of *Charivari* would be odious, so perhaps I shall spend an hour or two to-morrow at the National Gallery instead.

. . . Haye will probably come in this morning with an enormous bundle of proofs. I have not yet summoned up enough resolution for calling on Sir John Clark,—it is difficult to bestir myself. I have a glass of beer in front of me. . . . and aspire merely to the life of Paul Potter's cows.

To Madame H. Taine.

Sunday evening, May 21.

. . . I dine with Clark to-morrow. He asked me to go with me to call on Van de Weyer, the Belgian minister here, who had the gout and received us in bed. Both were agreed as to the views of the working classes in their respective countries, views greatly differing from those of the French labourers.

In Belgium and in England, should a political question

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arise, the agricultural labourer goes off to consult his landlord, and the artisan his employer, as to his vote ; this being more the case in the Netherlands than in England. As a young man, Van de Weyer had to take a letter to Monsieur Van der Stroet, one of the leading men of Holland and of very old family. . . . He found him playing cards with his barber, but the barber was none the less respectful when shaving him next day. And in the Brussels of to-day, at the Hôtel de Corbeau, the most exalted personages go and dine in company with tailors, etc. High and low meet in the same choral society. . . . There is none of the class jealousy, the levelling instinct of the Frenchman.

Here in England, liberty is protected by law ; the effect is soothing, even if the process be rude. The liberty of the individual is protected stringently. For instance, a servant was lately prosecuted by his master on a charge of theft. The next day the missing article was recovered, and the man, set at liberty, promptly demanded a compensation of two hundred pounds. On consulting a magistrate, the employer was told that he would do wisely to pay this sum, which he accordingly did. Then again, a summons was issued against an evil-doer of the name of John B—. The policeman, misinformed by his superior, served the summons on another man of the same surname, but of another Christian name, who was detained for two hours and then released with many apologies. This man then summons the head of the police and receives four hundred pounds damages.

Here are two principles unknown in France, but faithfully followed in all free countries. Firstly,—frank and

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thorough submission to the decision of the majority, with no attempt at a coup d'état for the violation of this decision. Secondly,—permission for the minority to say and publish all that it desires to express. Neither of these rights is at all respected in France. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

London, May 22.

. . . I am staying at an hotel where Madame Albani has been living for the last eight months. Tagliafico is also here with his wife and daughter, and there are other painters and musicians. . . . I went to the National Gallery this morning . . . but could only just look round ; sight-seeing is too much for me nowadays, and then most of the pictures being under glass it is impossible to see them properly on account of the reflections. . . . London and its prodigious activity overwhelms me : I long for the country. . . . After lunch to-morrow Arthur Russell is going to take me to see Grote, the historian, who wants to meet me. . . .

M. Van de Weyer told me yesterday that the average young Englishman knows little of his own literature on leaving the University, and that he and Macaulay made a test of this on one occasion by asking two young Oxford men whether they had read Sterne. "Sterne, the author of *Tristram Shandy*? No." Such ignorance takes one aback, but their truthfulness was admirable. Van de Weyer said that a Belgian or a Frenchman would have feigned acquaintance with the author.

To Madame H. Taine.

London, May 23.

. . . Lunched to-day at Mr. Russell's with Odo Russell and

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Mr. Cartwright, the member for Oxford. Called on Grote, where I found Bain the psychologist. This evening I dine there with Guéneau de Mussy, medical adviser of the Orleans princes. . . . They all talked politics. According to Odo Russell, Bismarck would prefer to treat with Napoleon re-established as emperor, even with a smaller payment; he would have been more sure of his hand, and would have had both policeman and ally upon the throne of France. The London bankers are offering Thiers the necessary money. Rothschild will manage it all. They count upon the financial vitality of France, but are uneasy at the protectionist tendencies of Thiers.

“ If a firm Government such as that of Louis-Philippe, were established in France, would you English enter into a defensive alliance with us against Bismarck in order to save Holland, Denmark or Austria ? ” “ Probably not, we fear to be entangled.”

In case of war England can only send eighty thousand men to the continent, which is nothing against Prussia. Odo Russell declares that at Versailles the representatives of the neutral powers were treated like small boys. . . . Prussia has been following the example of Napoleon, and feels her own power. Nothing but coalition can withstand her, and there is no prospect of coalition anywhere. As long as this Czar lives, Russia will be her ally, but then there will probably be a rupture, for the Germans are hated in Russia, and are already saying that the two military powers are forced into conflict by their own equality. It was the same thing with Napoleon and Russia in 1813.

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To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, May 24.

Arrived here two hours ago. . . . I was loaded with kindness in London. Mr. Grote insisted upon my dining with him on my last evening there. His wife is a woman of sixty-five, very interested in all public matters, "a stout woman in every sense of the word."¹ She has a good strong voice of her own, and speaks with much eloquence and humour at public meetings on behalf of political rights for women, standing with her hands behind her back or gesticulating freely. She has taken up political economy and social questions generally, very thoroughly and with real business instinct: she has promised to send me some of her own pamphlets. The thrift and self-denial of our French peasants arouses her admiration,—also their zeal in work and their love of the land. She says that the English agricultural labourer is entirely different,—improvident, spendthrift, always on the parish or being helped in some manner; but also that the soil of England is poor, and that even if the labourer were able to acquire any of it for himself he would not be able to work it profitably, as it needs to be managed by capitalists. Her husband would be a splendid model for Vandyke.—Seventy-five years of age,—very tall and with strongly-marked features, the type of the "gentleman,"—but he understands history only according to the English treatment, from the political point of view alone. He has written a history of Greece — without having visited the country; the influences of locality and climate do not appeal to him as significant.

I sat next a Mr. Robinson,—professor of philosophy at

¹ Taine's own words in the original.

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University College,—and a Mr. Bain, “ a sharp and acute ” ¹ Scotsman whom I drew out on the subject of psychology. It seems that he and Grote have been in correspondence about my study of *Intelligence* all through the winter. I am better known here than I thought. The manager of my London hotel could not do enough for me after learning my name. . . . I have just been taking a walk through Oxford. The air is as charged with soot as in London, and one has to breathe in smoke. The public monuments are dreadfully disfigured by it and the stone crumbles badly ; the outlines are good, however, when distinguishable.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, May 25.

I have scarcely the heart to write to you to-day, for I have just heard of all the horrors going on in Paris,—the burning of the Louvre, the Tuileries, the Hôtel de Ville. The miscreants ! The savage wolves ! And with petroleum ! What can be saved from such flames ! The Prussians would never have done as much ! The savages who wantonly destroy such masterpieces are beyond the pale of humanity ! The English papers say that they do not ask for quarter and that none is given, that they are shot down by scores, and that whole bands of armed women have to be marched off handcuffed to Versailles. . . . I have no heart for anything. I was at the Oxford Library when the librarian showed me all this in the papers. A Frenchman gets treated with a sort of pity in presence of such folly and misery.

. . . Hot and heavy weather here, steady rain to-day, and always, everywhere, the smell of soot. . . .

¹ Taine's own words in the original.

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To Madame H. Tainé.

Oxford, May 26.

My lecture was, I think, a success. I was told so at any rate, and the hall was full. Mr. Van Laun, translator of my *History of English Literature*, came to see me this morning and brought the first part of the printed copy; it will all appear in October. Max Müller took me to pay calls, and I dine with him on Sunday. The next day I am to breakfast with Mr. Sackville Russell, nephew of Arthur Russell and heir to the duchy of Bedford,—a very pleasant young fellow. As well as their rowing the undergraduates here have volunteer drill, all kinds of athletics and debating societies like that of Molè. . . . I mean to try to get them to talk to me.

Have called on the Rev. Mark Pattison, Dean of Lincoln College,—a man of sixty, with a penetrating, rather sharp manner. His wife is quite young, a charming woman, delightfully fresh and *piquante*. Their old house is a most alluring nest, covered with ivy, surrounded by stately trees,—most comfortable. Mr. Pattison is very liberal in his views and commentates on Plato. His wife says that one becomes fossilized in Oxford and that the undergraduates cultivate muscle at the expense of brain.

Max Müller has married a sister of the editor of the *Times*, who brought him fifty thousand pounds. He himself gets, I think, a thousand pounds a year from the University, with twenty-four lectures to give in the year. They have four children, and a large Gothic house surrounded by flowers and verdure. He has no one to collaborate with here, and cannot do full justice to his philology. A few young men work with him for a year or two, and then the poorer of them abandon the study for some

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lucrative position, while the rich ones enter Parliament. However, he says that his ideas and books are taking root and are already modifying the language teaching of the schools. He is engaged on a big work at the expense of the Government,—the editing and translation of the Rig-Veda. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, May 27.

I am writing to you from the Union Club, a most convenient Oxford institution where I read my papers in the greatest comfort. How well the English understand elegance and comfort; what good order here everywhere,—what prosperity! Our own poor country offers a painful contrast. I know now what has escaped in Paris, unless there have been fresh attacks. The fire was but ten minutes from our house. . . .

The English papers speak pityingly of our calamities but severely criticize our national character and fear for our future. In this outbreak they read a desire for effect, a revolutionary extravagance with a fiendish delight in winding up things generally with a pantomimic flourish. They say that there is a certain ferocity at the back of our nature, and that these Paris massacres show the monkey turning into the tiger. They all agree in fearing a White Terror for the near future, an aggressive narrow clericalism which in ten years' time will regain strength for the revolutionary party. Max Müller came to see me this morning, and then Dr. Jowett, master of Balliol College, who is somewhat akin in mind to Renan, and who has written on Plato and on St. Paul. We discussed the nature and origin of language, the methods of optimism and of philo-

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sophy. I dine with him on Wednesday, also Saturday, when I am to meet Matthew Arnold. As a rule they speak English, while I reply in French. The Vice-Chancellor declares his satisfaction with my lecture. I have just come upon a very sympathetic article on my "Intelligence" in the English review *Nature*. Max Müller says that it is the great question of the day and that the origin of ideas and of language is what is most exciting interest here in England.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, May 28.

— I cannot keep my thoughts away from Paris. Whole streets have been destroyed; well-dressed women throwing petroleum into the cellars. . . . The English reporters give heartrending details. . . .

There is a considerable movement here for doing away with the right of the eldest son to the entail. Many people consider the concentration of land among a few owners as dangerous. The agricultural labourers here are not as well off as ours, and work in "gangs," and are supported by the parish. As to the workhouses, the best side of these alone is shown to visitors: a great deal of tyranny goes on in them, which is the reason that the poor prefer to starve than to enter such a refuge.

The outbreak that is devastating Paris could well come to pass in England. Mr. Pattison says that there is no need to dread it within the next twenty years, but that it must come sooner or later. No military force in London, nothing but policemen; over three million inhabitants, among which quite two hundred thousand roughs and ne'er-do-wells. The bitterness of the poor against the

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wealthy and against the social conditions that keep them in poverty is very marked. If the London roughs were to league themselves together and strike together, they could make themselves masters of the city for a month, and things would be there as in Paris now.

The English artisans are better educated and more sensible than ours. "The difference between a mechanic and an agricultural labourer," said Mr. Smith to me, "is greater than that which separates the mechanic from myself." The artisan does not contemplate forcing the state to do away with his grievances, and feels that it would be unjust to expect the public to pay to help him. He admits that the capitalist is a useful and necessary instrument in the machinery of the state,—a sort of sponge for the collection and better employment of money. He is not hostile to the natural law of supply and demand. What embitters him against the wealthy classes is their extravagance,—their costly pleasures and the waste of human labour which these necessitate. At the present moment he only thinks of how to get his salary raised, but the day will probably come when he will understand the connection between politics and his own personal interests, when he will wish to have a hand in the government. The question is—will he then resort to violence, or to the extension of the franchise?

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, May 29.

. . . I have not seen any one since writing to you yesterday, but took an hour's walk along the High Street and in the grounds of Magdalen College. It is all very beautiful, very calm, very classical. Happy England—

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unhappy France ! No one here can see any solution of our difficulties. One paper wishes for us some great leader, some military dictator. At Mr. Smith's some hoped for the continuance of the Republic, others for the amalgamation of claimants. If the Duc de Bordeaux had the courage to abdicate his claims or the good luck to die, we might have some chance. After such events as the present, the Republic can be but a provisional matter.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, May 30.

I have just seen another English paper, and . . . have hopes that our houses may have been spared by the flames. It seems that a number of German socialists were among the insurgents. Do not omit to take a passport for the journey from Tours to Paris,—mine was demanded three times between Versailles and Mans, and three times between Saint Denis and Calais. . . .

Sackville Russell lunched with me to-day,—a young fellow of twenty,—more of a man than a Frenchman is at thirty,—very sensible, well-informed, already quite *au fait* in politics, with no affectations, a man who wants to learn and who will learn. He will probably make a statesman,—at any rate a good parliamentarian. . . . One of the papers says that according to a Versailles correspondent, Paris will cease to be the capital and that it will be made into a fortress of the first order, connected with Havre by a chain of fortresses, so that it can always be reinforced and re-provisioned. According to calculations the insurgents have eight or nine thousand dead and thirty thousand prisoners. I hear that damages are estimated at £250,000,000.

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To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, May 31.

After my lecture, Mr. Kitchin, of Christ Church, took me for a walk to Iffley, a small neighbouring village. I had said how much I wanted to see a village and the inside of a cottage. We only saw one, the clergyman who introduced us saying that it was very difficult to gain admittance, the people being "very independent." There were two rooms in this cottage, tenanted by a bricklayer earning a guinea a week, but often out of work for three months of the year. He pays three-and-six a week rent, and has a strip of garden about as large as our drawing-room at Châtenay. The rooms were very low and small, with very little air. In the poorer cottages the clergyman complains of want of proper space. The bricklayer and his daughter were having tea and bread-and-butter. They had a number of knick-knacks about the room—in very bad taste—just as in the room of a *conciierge*.

The clergyman is a Fellow of the University; his church dates from 1100; it is built of very hard stone, with Romanesque windows, and a large square central tower. It had a curious sort of ornamental tracery, and there were roses alternating with heads of men and animals, and little groups carved around the door. In the churchyard stands a yew tree of perhaps twenty feet in diameter, rotting in the centre, and said to date from the time of Julius Caesar. The clergyman himself was melancholy and dignified; he had lost his wife and three or four children. His vicarage dates from the reign of Henry VIII and has a most delightful view into green distances and blue haze. There were two drawing-rooms full of oil-paintings, photographs,

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and copies of the best pictures of Dresden, Florence and Rome. It is all so different from the surroundings of our French country *curés*.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, June 1.

I dined yesterday with Jowett, the master of Balliol. Dean Stanley was also there with his wife, Lady Augusta; also the heir of the Duke of Bedford, with his son. The houses of these dignitaries are magnificent,—simple and spacious, with large bay-windows, rare flowers, and the most perfect copies of Rembrandt and Dürer, and photo-gravures of Raphael's cartoons on the stairway. During dinner I had to talk politics as usual, and Mr. Russell and the others think that a revolution is to be feared in England. "Fortunately though," they said, "our roughs do not generalize and philosophize as yours do, with a theory on their banner and gun in their hands."

Mr. Stuart Mill rather approved of our red republicans, and his niece has just been defending the Commune in the *Fortnightly Review*. The most notable Communist here,—Mr. Frederic Harrison,—sums up their principles by the sentence, "Let capital be employed for the noblest objects," and says that it was such a phrase that armed the hundred thousand Communists of Paris.

According to all the information received, the women are perfectly fanatical in Paris, and in the Red quarters the officers are still being shot at and single soldiers murdered. My own conviction is that Paris will cease to be capital of France, and that a great gulf is to separate us from Parisian life such as we have known it.

After my work to-day I took a solitary walk round

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Magdalen College. I never tire of these ancient buildings, ivy-wreathed, and shadowed by the Past, and I revel in the quadrangles, which remind one of those of Italian convents. Behind stretch vast gardens and glades of giant elms, tame deer gliding in and out amongst them; long paths beside the river under stately trees, vistas of green fields embroidered with wild flowers. The luxuriance of vegetation must be seen to be imagined.

The great quadrangles with their green lawns are generally silent and deserted, affording a sense of solitude—a solitude that is picturesque, studied and poetic. And as one leaves these haunted precincts it is to be confronted by a tall rampart, a Gothic chapel, a gateway of the Renaissance, a seventeenth century bronze statue, colonnades standing out against the sky, stately domes,—and all is framed by trees and flowers. For serious work, Oxford is far too beautiful, the life too crowded with the pleasures of society. Oxford owns that she does not work as German universities must work.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, June 4.

I was at Professor Jowett's yesterday, where I was introduced to the poet, Mr. Swinburne, whose verses are in the style of Baudelaire and Victor Hugo. He is a short man with reddish hair, and his blue tie and his overcoat were in striking contrast with all the black coats and white ties around him. . . . He is very enthusiastic over modern French literature, Hugo and Stendhal, and also over painting. His style is morbid and visionary.

I was also introduced to Matthew Arnold, the poet and critic, son of the famous Dr. Arnold. He inspects primary

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schools at a salary of a thousand pounds per annum, and is a great friend and admirer of Sainte-Beuve. He is a tall man with dark hair growing very low on his forehead ; his face is too often puckered with elaborate grimaces, but his manner is most courteous and amiable. His brother, Thomas Arnold, who lives here, has sent me a small book of extracts covering the whole range of English literature. He wrote very kindly about my own work. The rest of the evening was spent talking to the young girls to whom I was introduced, among them Miss Arnold,¹ who sat next me at dinner. "A very clever girl," said Professor Jowett, as he was taking me towards her. She is about twenty, very nice-looking and dressed with taste (rather a rare thing here: I saw one lady imprisoned in a most curious sort of pink silk sheath). Miss Arnold was born out in Australia, where she was brought up till the age of five. She knows French, German and Italian, and during this last year has been studying old Spanish of the time of the Cid, also Latin, in order to be able to understand the mediaeval chronicles. All her mornings she spends at the Bodleian Library ;—a most intellectual lady, but yet a simple, charming girl. By exercise of great tact, I finally led her on to telling me of an article,—her first,—that she was writing for *Macmillan's Magazine* upon the oldest romances. She is very intimate with Mrs. Pattison,² wife of the Master of Lincoln College,—a young wife of twenty-six wedded to a man of between fifty and sixty. This Mrs. Pattison—daughter of a banker—is quite remarkable. She is interested in all intellectual pursuits, and has just

¹ Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

² Later Lady Dilke, who died 1904.

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been up to London to hear *Tartuffe* acted in French. She knows several languages and a great deal about painting,—in fact she also paints ; writes art-criticisms in the *Academy* and the *Saturday* ; is learning to play the violin—being already a pianist. She and her husband work about eight or ten hours a day, only meeting at one o'clock, while they begin work again in the evening. All these ladies and some of the gentlemen have formed a croquet club, hiring a lawn and amusing themselves there two hours a day. Pretty Mrs. Pattison is the “leading mind” of feminine society here in the domain of literature and art, as Miss Smith in deeds of charity and in education. Miss Arnold, in extenuation of her article, said, “Everybody writes or lectures here, and one must follow the fashion. Besides it passes the time, and the library is so fine and so convenient.” Not in the least pedantic. All this is merely the overflowing of youth and intellectual power. But yet in all I hear or read I never come across any true delicacy of literary feeling, never the gift, the art of really understanding the souls and passions that animated past humanity. It is all just erudition, very solid, but little more : take Mr. Freeman, for instance, who is re-writing Augustine Thierry’s history of the Norman Conquest.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, June 5.

My fourth lecture to-day ; it went off fairly well. The ladies always predominate in my audience. I am told by one of the curators that the distinction of D.C.L. is to be conferred upon me. The ceremony will probably take place on Thursday.

Yesterday I dined at Christ Church. Picture a dining

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hall sixty feet high,—like the nave of a church,—lighted by great Gothic windows,—overhead old beams dating from Henry VIII, and all around long rows of portraits (bad ones, one by Gainsborough excepted). The undergraduates were dining there too,—I had just seen them coming out of chapel,—which is a large church, recently and very well restored,—all in white surplices, a Sunday uniform. There was very fine music, grand and dignified. It is on coming out of church and seeing the chasubles and surplices of all these professors, rectors and students that one realizes the profoundly ecclesiastical character of the whole University.

The evening I spent at Mr. X.'s, who has taken honours in mathematics and in literature. He has a large house of his own with a little green garden, four children and five maids, and is very busy with charities and local matters. His wife, small and dainty, does not look more than twenty. They say that a family of six hundred pounds income, and with two children and two maids, can live comfortably at Oxford and make short visits to the seaside, though not manage the Continent or any considerable distances.

A maid receives sixteen pounds a year; a house such as theirs is rented at a hundred a year.

I visited Mrs. Pattison during the day. She seems quite learned as to the French Renaissance, and writes monographs and catalogues. The English always approach things from the practical side. I had great trouble to-day to get them to understand some fine touches of Racine's.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, June 6.

Apparently the degree of D.C.L. is a very great honour,

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the greatest that the University can bestow. So next Thursday I shall have to put on a red robe and listen to a Latin discourse. This morning I spent in preparing for my lecture of to-morrow, and I paid calls yesterday and to-day. Some agreeable illusions were thereby dispelled. That intelligent and natural girl of fifteen—Miss X.—has enormous feet, while Mesdames Y. and Z. have spoilt their complexions by overstudy. I still come across most numerous families. M. K. has four sisters, a brother, and already four children of his own. M. B. has three or four small children, as well as the older ones. He has no money of his own, but lives by coaching and by writing, and has the most charming house, new and comfortable, in the Gothic style, with a fourteenth-century Italian portal, and a green garden all around. Everywhere I meet with this hand-to-mouth existence.

M. B. and his wife have lived for some years out in the Colonies, where he had some post under Government. In his house are some very fine engravings but some very painful water colours,—green and yellow and red dashed crudely one upon the other. Open fires everywhere, and all over the Union Club where I am now writing this to you.

I have been working for two hours in the Bodleian Library, and at intervals strolling through the buildings and the quadrangles. They are building and planting here, as well as preserving the old. Keble College, for instance; and University Museum, an enormous new building, Gothic, in staring brick, with pointed roof and ugly little cupolas like extinguishers, the roof tiled blue and red alternately, giving a most unsatisfactory effect. Mr. Ruskin, who is a professor here, directed the construction

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of this Museum ; his books are better than his buildings. But the new park, with its vistas of green distance, its little hills lost in blue haze, will be quite charming in another hundred years. Nothing is more admirable than the way in which the future is here provided for.

Max Müller is coming back, as his father-in-law was thrown out of his carriage and did not recover. I must not go to call on him, it would not be good form here. There are to be German or Italian lectures at the Taylor Institute next year. As to his Sanscrit, he has a dozen pupils but none who work seriously at it ; those who are at all promising are all embryo church dignitaries and leave the University to become immersed in practical charitable life. There is no hope at all of creating a race of patient philologists.

To Madame H. Taine.

Oxford, June 8.

Yesterday I dined at Ingram Bywater's, a fellow of Exeter College, and met three or four of his friends, all perfectly delightful, he himself especially so, most charming and sensible. What cultured and what pleasant people here ! Bywater is most modest as to his attainments ; he specializes in Greek philosophy and has rediscovered in Jamblichus some fragments of the dialogues of Aristotle. He has a charming home, overlooking gardens and beautiful buildings, and possesses some admirable copies of pictures. I was admiring two of Tintoret's and he brought me other copies this morning. His books are very well bound and very ornamental.

Of an evening here one feels as if on an operatic stage, amidst the long ivy-covered walls and Gothic fantasies

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looming darkly in the moonlight, and a few lights twinkling from the stately buildings in the shadows.

Mr. Neubauer, who is by birth a Hungarian but is also a naturalized Frenchman, and who travels for the Institute and makes catalogues of the Hebrew manuscripts, says that no one really works here,—five or six at most. The Divinity professors are given as much as sixteen hundred pounds a year, and live like canons. Of the three professors of philosophy, one is the best informed authority on Aristotle in the world, and possesses every known work bearing upon Aristotle, yet he has never published anything. Many men here take up a subject in order to enlighten themselves upon a question or just as a pastime, but do not consider it necessary to write upon it. The impulse, the divine afflatus of authorship, is not theirs.

Mr. Neubauer asserts that the large sale of books and reviews in England is merely a matter of fashion. You buy a review, even to five copies of the same number, or a dictionary, or a weighty book of history, just because your visitors say, "Oh, you must have that!" The reading-table would not be complete if any successful work were missing there, but the work is rarely read, just dipped into. It is owing to this fashion that Tennyson gets his five thousand pounds a year. English people are so rich that they can afford to pay six shillings for a volume of two hundred pages.

The Reverend Mr. Jackson, one of the curators of the Taylor Institute, has called on me and given me some interesting information as to the poor of this country. In Devonshire and another county he has been studying, the weekly wage of an agricultural labourer averages eight or

nine shillings. He must be very skilful and intelligent to earn twelve shillings. Now as a rule he has six children, and it is therefore not possible for him to support himself and his family except by public or private charity. As a rule an English working-woman is very helpless, not able to manage the most simple cooking; she buys things ready-made and ready-cooked, which is of course not at all economical, in fact she knows nothing about economizing and is altogether a great contrast to a French-woman. Mr. Jackson, who was on a charitable committee in some village, once allowed fifteen shillings a week to a household possessed of fourteen children. Neither the wife nor the eldest daughter, a girl of fifteen, knew the slightest thing about cooking,—just living on bread and butter and tea. He advised them to set about buying meat, and making soup or stew. Their answer was, “We should not know how to do it.” Everywhere one sees this helplessness and extravagance. Mrs. Jackson, who has five or six maids, is obliged to teach them to trim their own hats, as otherwise a large part of their earnings goes to milliners. And then there is so much drunkenness among the men.

At two o'clock to-day the distinction of D.C.L. was conferred upon me, with a very polite little Latin speech. My red robe was all ready for me, and after the ceremony I had to sit on the left hand of the Vice-Chancellor and listen to a discussion as to the voting of eighty pounds to provide shutters for the lecture-hall, so that lectures on optics could be held there.

CHAPTER III

AFTER THE WAR

Return to Châtenay—Studies for the *Origines de la France Contemporaine*—Translation of the *Séjour en France*—The School of Political Science—Pamphlet on Universal Suffrage—*Notes on England*—Researches in the National Archives—Various Articles—Correspondence

ON his return from England, Taine began work again at once. After finishing his course of lectures at the École des Beaux-Arts, which had been interrupted by the Commune, and having already found a fairly definite outline of his next work he began the course of long and laborious researches at the *Bibliothèque* and the National Archives which were to supply the material for his *Origines de la France Contemporaine*. It was a great sacrifice to give up his philosophical studies and his theory of the Human Will which was to follow his work on Intelligence.

However, in face of the destruction caused by the war and by the Commune, and in the general bewilderment caused by the task of national reconstitution, Taine felt that this was not the time for abstract speculation, and

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realized that the nation required help from the thinker as well as from the man of action. He felt that many of the evils rife in France arose from the rupture of modern society with the traditions of the race, and that before reconstructing anything it would be necessary to investigate the soil on which modern France had grown in order to discover the cause of the uprooting; also that this would demand close study of the moment when Past and Present had definitely parted company,—the moment of the great French Revolution. Eighty-four years of periodical upheaval surely indicated some fault in the reconstitution of the consulate. It was therefore incumbent upon some one to seek out this fault, and to study its influence upon modern France. In undertaking the task which occupied the last twenty-two years of his life Taine did not at first realize its weight, and merely thought at first of one volume of general ideas. Later, in face of the accumulation of new facts, and of the necessity for expressing himself quite clearly, he decided to divide his work into three parts,—the Old Régime, the Revolution and the New Régime.

During his early researches Taine discovered in the Richelieu collection a book by an English lady who had been detained in France from 1792 to 1795, and who, upon her return to England, had given her journal and her letters to Mr. John Gifford to publish, which was done in 1796. Taine considered these documents worthy of introduction to French readers, and had them translated under his own supervision, and published by instalments in the *Français* during the latter part of 1871.

The publication of these documents in volume form in

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1872 gave rise to some sharp discussion in the papers, some maintaining that they were the work of a paid agent of Pitt's, others,—and these more numerous,—declaring them to be a mere invention of Taine himself. In the second edition of the volume, Taine therefore had to give a reference to the original in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale, thus victoriously confuting the second objection. For the first, however, it was necessary to discover the name of the anonymous writer, and unfortunately the premises of Messrs. Longways, where the papers were first published, had been entirely destroyed by fire. Taine, however, had studied the Revolution period sufficiently well to be convinced that the author of these papers was both reliable and well informed.

It was in this same summer of 1871 that M. Boutmy first acquainted Taine with the generous scheme inspired in him by the misfortunes of his country, the idea for the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*. This scheme, which was conceived during the terrible days of the siege of Paris and matured during conversations with M. Vinet, at once gained the sympathies of M. Taine, who gave his friend every help towards the accomplishment of his design. Other men of note also rallied round young Boutmy,—first, Victor de Champlouis, who had just left the army, then Edouard André and Jacques Siegfried. All through the summer of 1871 they met frequently to discuss the difficulties opposed to the new scheme, not only by technicalities of law, but by the French national characteristics. The rocks on which in 1848 the *École d'Administration* had foundered still towered and menaced; it was necessary to steer clear of them and preserve the

new school from any governmental influence. M. Boutmy's ability enabled him by September to address a definite programme of appeal to different influential men, and among those who responded were Guizot and Laboulaye. In the *Débats* of October 17, Taine published an article explaining the nature of the scheme to the general public, and on January 10, 1872, the *École des Sciences Politiques* began its first session in a modest hired hall. Some hostility among political men was aroused against the new school by Taine's inaugural address, and prominent among its enemies was Henri Brisson. . . .

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the usefulness of M. Boutmy's work, but attention must be called to the helpful influence it exerted upon all who shared in the honour of its origin.

Taine, in particular, after so much sorrow and discouragement derived benefit from its inspiration of enthusiasm, and new hope awoke within him at the sight of old and young, teachers and students, men of science and men of business, rallying round the scheme. This new source of hope was doubtless all the more valued by him in that it emanated through the friend whose teacher he had been, and who now in his turn had donned the master's robe.

Taine remained deeply attached to the School and a member of its Committee until his death,—and M. Boutmy has honoured his faithful collaboration not only by the portrait in the Rue Saint-Guillaume, but still more imperishably by his memoir of 1893. Boutmy writes of his friend :—

“During our committee meetings Taine rarely made speeches. He preferred instead to question, to ask for

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explanations, thus obliging us to examine more clearly our own projects and the means we held for their accomplishment. His questions, propounded as they were with careful method and prevision, tended to throw light on many points, and he led us rather by his questions than by his advice. His advice, however, whenever given, was far-seeing with the foresight that inspires deeds; and a plan of action once decided on, he avoided any troubling of the man authorized to execute it with small objections as to detail; rather he sought to help, to give him confidence for his task. Never had man of thought a keener faculty for realizing the claims of practical business." (*Taine, Schérer, Laboulaye*, by Émile Boutmy.)

It has been observed that Taine had planned to write a series of political articles and that this project was inspired solely by his patriotism, for nothing was more opposed to his personal tastes. Before leaving Pau he had begun some articles on the Suffrage. These were published in the *Temps*, and appeared in pamphlet form towards the close of the year.

A letter followed to the editor of the *Temps* upon the circulation of Moderate papers, and another to the *Journal des Débats* upon the means of paying off the war indemnity. Taine, however, never considered these articles as more than dictated by the needs of the passing moment, and twenty years later, speaking of his article on Universal Suffrage, he termed it nothing but a slight sketch pointing out a very inadequate remedy; referring, however, to the last chapter of his *Régime Moderne* for a more complete plan.

His *Notes sur l'Angleterre* appeared in volume form

by the end of that year, and was at once translated into English by Mr. Fraser Rae, who also undertook an excellent critical review of Taine and his work.

On wishing to sketch out a definite plan for his book on contemporary France, Taine was made aware of the scarcity of references for the revolutionary period, especially in what regarded the provinces.

His predecessors, more closely in touch with the period than himself, had always built upon local traditions ; sometimes without troubling to verify their statements ; and any memoirs of that time were either not yet published or were not to be relied on.

The *Moniteur*—Buchey and Roux—gave the facts and speeches according to official interpretation, and had to be followed with discretion. De Tocqueville had written an admirable book, but, according to the fashion of his day, had omitted any references, and his heirs would not consent to supply his notes.

Taine had therefore to carve out his work from the beginning, and the months of 1872 and 1873 were devoted to research among the dusty shelves of the Archives Nationales. He used to start out early every morning, returning quite exhausted in the evening, having tasted nothing but a piece of bread and a cup of black coffee granted as a favour by the porter of the Hôtel de Soubise.

Often he returned with no spoils from his expedition ; sometimes, however, he had struck on some rich vein of ore, and viewed with delight the growth of his stock of precious documents. The officials of the institution showed him every consideration, and M. Maury, the

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director, especially earned his gratitude by assigning him a little room in which he could place his papers from day to day without fear of disarrangement. During these two years Taine several times attempted to begin the writing of his book, but whether his material was still insufficient, or whether the fatigue of the preparation had too much exhausted him, he could not manage to satisfy himself, and the writing made no progress.

Very few articles were written by him at this time,—one in 1872 on the *Aristophanes* of Émile Deschanel, another on the École des Sciences Politiques, in order to inform the general public of its success and of the changes to be made in its constitution, and then a letter to the *Débats* in reply to M. Naquet, who in the French Chamber had tried by means of misquotation to enlist Taine under his own banner. This letter caused Taine some serious vexation. Living in retirement as he did, he had not met M. Naquet personally, and did not know of his physical deformity; it happened, therefore, that he took up a phrase which the deputy had used about its being no more a crime to be “ pervers ” than to be blind or hump-backed, and in his reply laid some stress upon the latter adjective. When informed too late of his adversary’s actual infirmity, Taine suffered much remorse, as can be well understood by those acquainted with his natural kindness and exceptional courtesy of manner.

In 1873 we find a short article by Taine on the subject of heredity, as introduction to an essay by Theodore Ribot. For some years he had been following with the keenest interest the work of this young psychologist, and no other interest could have lured him from the

philosophical studies which still held the first place in his affections.

During an interval, when he was forced to suspend his researches at the Archives, he undertook a study of Prosper Mérimée, which was to serve as preface to the *Lettres à une Inconnue*, and this appeared in the *Journal des Débats* of December 4 and 6.

To George Brandès.

Châtenay, June 27, 1871.

. . . Our house here has been somewhat pillaged and somewhat injured. My wife's dresses are being worn by some sentimental Gretchen, and several of my books have served to light the pipe of some philosophical German ensign. But the chief things are intact. We have also suffered financially, as everybody has, but both my father-in-law and myself are anxious to work, and so we are working strenuously.

This has been a hard year! I often thought of your poor country, and now we, like yourselves, have suffered the oppression of the strong. Of all the calamities that have come upon us, the worst, in my opinion, and the one that pains me most, is the captivity of the two provinces, the position of 1,900,000 Frenchmen obliged to lose their nationality.

No one with any feeling can resign himself to the thought; it is not a question of vanity but a matter of duty. We trust that within the next ten years all the oppressed in Europe will be making common cause against a monarchy and people now trying to play the rôle of Spain under Charles V and Philip II. . . .

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I am very sorry to hear of your illness, but you will benefit from your native air. You have now collected all your spoils, and have but to classify and to elaborate ; your education is complete. I much regret not knowing any Danish, or I should follow your work with great pleasure.

Do not forget us when you come to France. I live summer and winter here at Châtenay, except for a few weeks in winter, when I am at my father-in-law's in Paris, 28, Rue Barbet-de-Jouy. We have no flowers left, our orange-trees have been frozen and the Germans have burnt the floors of our greenhouses. But we have still trees and grass left to us, and I shall be very glad to talk with you again in our arbour.

To Max Müller.

Châtenay, June 28, 1871.

Since my return I have been settling down here in the country, and have recommenced my lectures at the École des Beaux-Arts. Nearly all the rest of my time I have spent in reading and re-reading the works of a clever linguist well known to you. I need hardly speak of the benefit I derive from it,—it is a store of wisdom such as has seldom come my way ; but I should like to point out one thing about which I have some doubts : for a lover of psychology as I am, it is of great importance, and we have often talked it over under the great elms that fringe the new parks of Oxford.

The point at issue is our power of reasoning, our power of conceiving or of guessing at the Infinite. Your correspondence with Bunssen, and especially your *Deutsche*

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Liebe have given me much light. If I am not mistaken, you believe that the human mind, as soon as it develops, has a more or less vague intuition of an Infinity which is not only an infinity of time and space, but an Infinity of Being,—rather, of the Being Perfect, Universal,—the Intelligence Active and Creative,—in other words, God.

Later philosophers of our eclectic school of thought had come to just the same conclusion; when pressed, they acknowledged that the famous proofs of Saint Anselm, Descartes, Clarke and Leibnitz are not conclusive, and that in general man perceives God without syllogism, without induction,—spontaneously and instantaneously,—as he perceives the outside world,—as he perceives himself. This brings in a big psychological question which I should delight in seeing you treat psychologically, all the more in that your views upon religion, upon the origin of language,—your general *Weltanschauung*,—presuppose the distinct existence of reason. Through the researches of the experimental school we have now the history and explanation of the internal mechanism which gives us our perception of outward things and our general consciousness; it would be a task worthy of you to add to this, in your precise terms and with your exact scientific method, the history and explanation of the mechanism by means of which we conceive of God. Since you are doing me the honour of reading my work on Intelligence, you will know that I have not ventured far into this subject, and have but considered the Mathematical Infinity, as being simpler and quite clear. Within these limits I have tried to show that the operations of the mind for forming any conception of Infinity are just analysis, abstrac-

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tion, and the detachment of an abstract law included in some two terms of a series, and the conclusions that can be drawn from this law when once detached. Up to the present I find no indication that leads me to consider the faculty of perception of the Infinite as a distinct faculty, and I am inclined to believe that the idea of God, like perception of the region of higher mathematics and of an infinity of time and space, is formed by analysis, abstraction and combination. This is another motive for my desire to see you taking up the study from a psychological standpoint, and in this, as well as in philology, I should hope to gain much from your researches.

I met with much courtesy and kindness in Oxford, and hope that you will remember me to the gentlemen from whom I have received so much,—the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Smith, Mr. Arnold and Messrs. Bywater, Heale, Jackson, Kitchin and Jowett. And I owe most to you.

I have remembered you to Renan, who returns the compliment, but as I am living quite in the country, I have not yet met your friends.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, August 28, 1871.

The evening after I left you I bought the three volumes of de Tocqueville's *Démocratie en Amérique*, and re-read them. They are excellent, though somewhat too abstract; he would have done better to publish his notes. But how terrible thus to see all our calamities foretold! all our evils known so thoroughly, with no remedy suggested for their mitigation!

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I have been reading and copying a vast deal lately, so that my hand aches and my brain suffers from mental indigestion. . . . Georges Sand has offered her congratulations to the author of the article in the *Temps* (*Les Notes sur l'Angleterre*).

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, August 31, 1871.

Congratulations upon my articles in the *Temps* still overwhelm me. M. Hébrard proposes that I should take a journey to Russia at the expense of the *Temps*. . . . At the Bibliothèque I have been finding five volumes by English writers on travels and life in France in 1801, 1814 and 1815, also a delightful book upon the year 1848, by Comte Joseph d'Estourmel.

The following anecdote may amuse you,—it was told me at lunch by Halévy. You know that in July, 1870, Renan went to the North Cape with the Prince Napoleon. On the boat was a young actress,—Mlle. L.,—to whom the prince showed much kindness, and they all dined together. At the end of a few days Mlle. L. took the prince aside to tell him that her conscience was troubled, and that it was very wrong of him to make her dine in company with an impious renegade. This struck me as delightful.

To John Durand.

Paris, November 20, 1871.

. . . I am going to publish a translation of a very curious and almost unknown English work, containing letters from an English lady resident in France between 1792 and 1795. The correspondence of your compatriot Gouverneur Morris is most instructive. I am trying to come

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across similar letters from American residents under the Empire, the Restoration and Louis Philippe. If you can give me any information, or tell me the names of residents and whether their correspondence has been published, I shall be very much indebted to you. I value very highly the opinions formed by competent English and Americans as to French affairs,—you are in politics what our dilettanti and our critics are in art.

You ask my opinion on the state of matters here. I am studying French history from 1789 in order to form one. Meanwhile, I believe I can say that the authority of the Assembly is assured, as long as it does not divide too noisily nor make too obvious mistakes. The most essential thing is not to begin the war again before another ten years are past, and not to meddle with the course that Prussia will probably take against Russia by next spring. The more reasonable men here seem to wish M. Thiers to continue in power ; they also desire an electoral law to improve the organization of our universal suffrage ; further, an elective Upper Chamber, also general military service. Were Henry V to die, it is very probable that all influential country people,—Legitimists, Orleanists, landowners, or factory owners,—would join forces in order to manage local matters on harmonious lines, so that it would matter little whether the directing power were president or king. The essential point to be gained is that the wealthy and enlightened classes should lead the ignorant and those who live from hand to mouth. Not only is business looking up, but there is a strong revival of public spirit and national feeling. . . . We are about to found at Paris by means of private subscription an

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independent school for teaching political science. I come across a great many people who feel that both personal interest and national duty call for something of the sort, and so I am beginning to have some hope again ;—in short the two enemies of liberty here are the Reds and the Bonapartists. . . .

To M. F. Guizot.

Paris, December 19, 1871.

Messrs. Hachette have sent me your volume on the Duc de Broglie . . . which I intend to study carefully ;—few books could be more useful to me just now. Even incompetent men nowadays are obliged to study politics. Pen in hand I have been analysing the *Vues sur le Gouvernement de France*, while for the last six months I have been looking up the original sources of French history since 1789. At the Archive office I have discovered correspondence between the prefects from 1804 to 1813, and hope to get at that of the succeeding years, so I am particularly glad to have your book and would like to think that it was sent by your own orders.

Hachette has been told to forward you my *Notes sur l'Angleterre* and my pamphlet on Universal Suffrage ; allow me to offer them for your acceptance. I am indebted to you for the friends that I have made in England ; it was you who opened that country to me, therefore, all by which I have profited there is yours by right.

And I owe you many other things. Your *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe et en France* is still to-day the source from which historical ideas are elaborated, and your *Mémoires* on the July monarchy foretold what our ex-

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perience now begins to make us understand and realize—that in the conflict between the nation and the Government it was the nation that was in the wrong. The various documents I have been studying all point to the same conclusion; when one surveys the past carefully and calmly one can but find that, generally speaking, since 1789 the French have thought and acted partly like madmen, partly like mere children.

. . . I do not venture to speak to you of the Academy. M. de Loménie is your friend, and M. About is mine; should About fail the honour will be all the greater for the victor, since the vanquished will be one of the most vivid and most “*spirituel*” writers of our time,—perhaps the most French writer that we have in France. Twenty German and English writers put together would never produce among them anything like the *Grèce Contemporaine*, *Trente et Quarante*, *Progrès*, *Le Turco*, *Le Mari Imprévu*, or even the little volume called the *Assurances sur la Vie*. You will not be vexed at my thus praising a friend. . . .

To M. F. Charmes.

Paris, January 19, 1872.

You, I think, are the first who has not likened me to a mechanism of sharp unfeeling steel. You are right in thinking that I had my share of difficulties in England, but I believe in the great doctrine of Gautier and of Stendhal, which is that one should never express one's feelings upon paper. A public speaker represses his personal inclination to sob or cry; it is unseemly to make a public exhibition of one's heart, far better be accused of having none at all.

My mistake has always been in revealing my method too much, and that is because my method has always struck me as being the most useful thing about me. But the reader does not like to be shown the intricacies of the machinery; he likes to be conveyed by the machine without being reminded of the wheels and of the pistons. This fault of mine is less evident in my *Notes*; for which reason the work has done well, and I shall try to profit from the experience. And yet you will notice that a chapter you approve of—*Les Types*—is a most complete and scientific application of the theory of dominating tastes and dispositions. Yet again, the theory is only visible to those who look for it, and this reminds me of what de Bonald said with reference to himself and Châteaubriand, “He succeeded where I failed because he administered the drug in the form of pills, and I offered it just as I found it.”

To the Editor of “Le Temps.”

February 5, 1872.

SIR,—Allow me to submit to your readers an idea which seems very simple and also, as I venture to think, very useful. Many people to whom I have spoken on the subject consider it most opportune and practical, and among other advantages it has the merit of being able to be accomplished by each one of us within his own particular circle and at no personal expense. A few months ago, after looking over the old buildings of a small town in Central France, I entered a café and asked for a newspaper. A Radical paper was brought to me, and when I asked for a different one, a still more revolutionary sheet was produced. “Have you nothing but these Radical papers?”

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I inquired. I was informed that such papers were supplied free of charge, and that this saved a subscription to other papers. Possibly the free supply has now come to an end ; nevertheless this incident, and similar ones any one may observe for himself, is most instructive, for it shows the strength of the Radical propaganda. Radical opinions are so violent that they are necessarily contagious. The Utopian, the sectary, the man of abstract principles, the *déclassé*, with a grudge against society, the dreamer who has discovered a sure charm for establishing justice and perfect bliss upon the earth,—all such feel the need of exchanging their ideas ; they hawk round their little books, they give or lend their journals, and at last the scales weigh down upon their side because there is nothing to oppose them on the other. The supply of better mental food depends but on ourselves, the daily bread that we use ourselves. All that is necessary is to distribute our own papers after we have read them. Each of us gets the paper for himself that he considers the most sensible, honest and enlightening ; nothing hinders him from letting others profit from it after he has done with it himself. You hold firmly to your own opinions, you wish for sympathy in them ; well then, try to gain this sympathy, and begin in your own home circle with those who live under your own roof. The opinions of the servants' hall are not without consequence in the drawing-room. Your servant is a man, an active citizen ; his vote counts as much as yours. It is neither humane nor even prudent to treat him entirely as a stranger or a mercenary. And his official respect, his private good feeling for you has its value, and is not difficult to win ; little kindnesses suffice

for this—let him have your paper every day. He will not only appreciate the small attention, but he will feel vaguely that some importance is attached to his political opinion, and at the end of six months the reading of your papers will not only have influenced him to some extent, but also others with whom he exchanges his ideas—the tradesmen, the gardener, the village folk.

This is but the first step; there is another still more useful measure. A number of rich or independent people live in the country for some part of the year, and the great fault of our social structure is that these usually live among themselves or like exotic plants under glass, without knowing more of their humbler neighbours than is brought about by subscriptions to local charities or a few words about the weather. Such people get a paper or several papers down from Paris every day, . . . and the village schoolmaster or *curé* would be seldom unappreciative of a copy second-hand. . . . Send one to the village inn, and let the Radical papers find a rival . . . or give a copy every day to the baker who brings your bread, on condition that he pass it on to the grocer, and the grocer to another. . . . I do not doubt that in two or three years' time a sure leavening of opinion will have gone on in your neighbourhood. . . . And let the same plan be carried out within the towns. . . . Any common bond of interest is good for those that share in it; men learn to know each other better, they teach each other, good comradeship grows up amongst them, they soften one towards the other instead of developing the bitterness born of mistrust and isolation. Such a consummation is desirable everywhere, and more especially in France,

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where not only classes but individuals are isolated, where, except when bound by ties of family or friendship, men only touch each other by the fragile links of business and politeness.

Later on, perhaps, some could be found to contribute not only newspapers but money. . . . An association could be formed for circulating opinions by post. . . . Perhaps, too, among the well-disposed, some even better disposed may be forthcoming who will start a Sunday paper for gratuitous distribution in inns and public places—a paper that will not only summarize the news of the week, but give a selection of articles from all the leading papers, as well as appropriate information, dialogues *à la Bastiat*, biographies of men like Franklin and George Stephenson, with other useful things . . . extracts also from the best standard works. If such a paper do not exist, then may it be created. . . .

To the Editor of "Le Journal des Débats."

February 9, 1872.

SIR,—Within the next two years we are bound to pay a sum of three milliards and a half. The bayonet is at our throat, and if we do not pay when the note of hand is due, it will certainly be used. For the supply of this tremendous ransom two means are proposed, which appeal to very differing sentiments.

The first is the ordinary loan. It appears in various shapes. Putting aside the suggestion of coercion there remains but an income-tax, such as was laid last July. It must be the work of the financiers and statesmen to arrange this in all its details. It will certainly be effica-

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cious, for last year supplied four milliards, 800 millions, instead of the two milliards demanded. Voluntary subscription will never provide any adequate amount, and we must harbour no illusions on this point. Voluntary subscription may possibly provide for millions, but not for milliards. Italy under similar circumstances provided seven million francs, the United States, where public spirit is so strong, five or six million dollars. Even in spite of our more urgent necessity and more characteristic enthusiasm the difference between the available and the required sum would still remain deplorable. The optimistic count upon five hundred millions; should this be realized by voluntary contribution, there would still remain nearly three milliards to be paid. . . .

This does not mean that voluntary contribution should not be resorted to,—quite the contrary, especially as it already has been started. It affords both moral and financial advantage. The moral benefit is the good effect on European opinion. If much money should be raised Europe will conclude that the French love their France and are prepared to make sacrifices for her. That there is money here as well as confidence the last loan amply proved, but it proved nothing else; those who invested were thinking of finance, and not of the redemption of their country. A hundred francs given for a patriotic cause proves more real public feeling than a million invested in a national loan. The crying need just now is to show foreigners that we are clinging to our country; there is no better way of securing consideration and respect. A German paper declared the other day that should this voluntary contribution prove at all considerable it would

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signify a "moral defeat" for Prussia. This is certainly true, for all, even Prussia, would have to admit that the thirty-six million Frenchmen are not a flock of sheep to be shepherded at hazard and despoiled by any chance marauder; they will see that the flock can make a stand and use its horns. It is not "egoism," as the Germans say, by which we are enfeebled,—it is by our habit of waiting for orders from a leader. Let us once achieve mutual understanding, let us once act in concert and upon our own initiative, and we shall be strong enough.

This is another moral benefit: the individual yet concerted action is the first step towards self-government. It offers a common object to thousands of private individuals; it teaches them by easy stages the art of association, and prepares them thus for public life. Any bond of disinterested union is a safeguard for France to-day. . . .

Let us presume that the contribution amounts to three hundred millions of francs a year for the space of three years in monthly instalments. That would make twenty-five millions a month towards the cancelling of the war indemnity, about the same amount that the Americans provide monthly towards theirs. Thanks to this arrangement the American debt is now at par; we might, therefore, hope the same for ourselves.

In this way we could raise the three milliards due to Germany at 100 francs instead of at 90 or even at 88, and at this rate it would mean a diminution of more than three hundred millions in our future debt, three hundred millions saved—net profit. Thus any one giving his hundred francs would be gaining another hundred for France over and above his actual contribution. This is worth pro-

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claiming, for people only give willingly when they can foresee with certainty the effect and efficacy of their gifts.

As to details, it seems to me that there should be committees for fixing a certain minimum of contribution according to which each contributor could assess himself. The offering would otherwise be arbitrary, and personal interests are always strongest; but most people would make it a matter of conscience not to give less than this fixed minimum. The plan already adopted by many—including workshops and schools—is within scope of every purse, however thin, and this is to give monthly one whole day's pay or income; in other terms, one-thirtieth of the annual income, from whatever source. A day labourer, a domestic servant, can make this sacrifice as easily as can the capitalist.

Thiers estimated the total annual revenue of France at fifteen or sixteen milliards, and several economists whom I have consulted on the subject consider this figure very near the truth. The thirtieth of this revenue is five hundred millions,—consider it three hundred millions,—this in monthly instalments of twenty-five millions would help towards the reduction of the debt, as has just been set forth.

Then, as at Nancy, let the subscription be on two scales;—by the first the subscribers would only bind themselves if the subscription reaches a certain figure, by the second there would be no conditions at all.

Then let such be managed separately by each parish, commune, quarter, and even street; nearly all the different societies, municipal councils and clergy will help, and all

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employers of labour should give in the names of their employees as well as their own. Self-interest and self-respect would also bear a part in this patriotic movement, for the list of contributions should be made public every week, and promote a generous rivalry not only between neighbours, but between villages and towns. . . .

One more suggestion. Let the bishop of each diocese encourage the clergy to preach upon the subject every Sunday. The women form the greater part of the church congregation, and the women of small households hold the purse-strings. . . .

After long study of French history and French ways, I feel convinced that none among the nations has more kindness of heart; it is only the influence of ancient usages that prevents this native generosity from taking active part in public matters, while another trait of national character never allows this kindness to be tempered by cool-headedness. Your Frenchman needs excitement, impetus, emotion, emulation. He must be able to feel that all eyes are fixed upon him as an individual. France is like a soldier who spends his ordinary leisure in idleness and who grumbles at barrack discipline, though when under fire and surrounded by his comrades he is capable of extraordinary heroism and self-sacrifice.

No one can foresee exactly what may come of this voluntary contribution at our country's need; possibly all France may rise to it as to a call to arms.

To Alexandre Denuelle.

February 21, 1872.

MY DEAR FATHER,—The political future is very black. I dined yesterday with friends at Brebant's, and heard

that a Bonapartist attempt is expected, and that for this reason the Centre and the Right are trying to join forces by means of a definite manifesto. Under such circumstances a danger may arise within the next two months of internecine strife amongst the military, which would place us in the same condition as that of Spain or Mexico. An attempt may perhaps be made to nominate the Duc d'Aumale as vice-president under Thiers, in order to have some titled leader in case of a new Bonapartist Boulogne or Strasburg. It is very trying. If the *status quo* could but endure, it would be a liberal and parliamentary education for the country. Yet no one can foresee anything just now. . . .

To Madame H. Tainé.

Châtenay, March 31, 1872, Easter Day.

B. has learnt by sure information, which I cannot well indicate by letter, that the treaty between Italy and Prussia has been now concluded. It is an alliance, offensive and defensive, against France, should she desire to intervene on the Pope's behalf, and entailing on her in case of her defeat the forfeiture of Nice and even of Savoy. This is a serious matter, but will perhaps have the advantage of putting some ballast into the heads of the Right in case it should come into power.

It appears that the rise of the Orleans party is as much dreaded in Italy as that of the Comte de Chambord. In a reply to Prince Napoleon four or five years ago, the Duc d'Aumale declared that it was necessary to maintain the temporal power of the Pope. I hope, however, that all parties will end by realizing that for the next ten years France will have to lie low. . . .

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I have been reading a great deal lately of Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau. They are great originators, great geniuses—what a distance between them and the wretched madmen of the Revolution!

I have just received an honorary membership from the “American Institute of Architects.” This sort of thing will be getting quite amusing! You know I am already D.C.L. of the University of Oxford. I have had another offering from America, no less flattering and still more surprising.¹ I must go to Paris to see whether it be serious, and then I will tell you all about it.

Easter Day I have been spending alone with my books. I shall earn for myself the Roman lady’s epitaph, “She stayed at home and span.” My mental food was some analytical geometry and a novel of George Sand’s, and I took a good step forward in the planning of my first chapter.

I had a letter from Mr. Rae with a copy of his translation of my *Notes sur l’Angleterre*; the preface is very kindly, and I see that the publication of the book in the *Daily News* has been an enormous advertisement for it in India, Australia, Canada, the United States. Rae has corrected and amplified what regarded Paradol, but he continues cold towards About. The charming delicacy of his style does not appeal to him at all.

I have been through Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette*; it is complicated, and not always of the highest order.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, April 2, 1872.

I went to Paris to-day and met Charles Clément, Sarcey, Templier and Dufeuille. Clément says that Gleyre is

¹ A sum of money from a newspaper.

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much better, but that he is still something of a wild cat ; he says, too, that he needs the miseries of an old bachelor's existence to make him really happy.

I am accused of being the author of *Un Séjour en France*, so have gone to the Library to take the number of the book from the catalogue, and have sent it to Hachette to appear in the second edition. . . .

The Marquis de la Rochejacquelein has written reproaching me for having said that M. de Barante had collaborated in the Memoirs of his grandmother, the Marquise de la Rochejacquelein. I had spoken from what I remembered of M. de Barante's own assertion, but I cannot now call to mind where I came across it.

I shall spend my few weeks of Paris in reading at the Archives and the Bibliothèque. Just now I cannot manage to write at all, perhaps my head is over-tired, or perhaps my subject is too stiff. At any rate, I am going through a time of sterility, which greatly worries me. Nothing is worse than the feeling of impotence. . . .

To Louis Dépret.

Châtenay, June 26 (1872 ?)

*Le Séjour en France*¹ I arranged while engaged in researches for my work on the French Revolution. I read up many manuscripts at the Archives, and a great number of unknown books at the Bibliothèque. It was my wish to see the people of the period face to face, with all the scenes in detail as much as possible. I assure you that no one has ever yet revealed the true aspect of that time ; it would need Macaulay's genius to do it well.

¹ There are some words lacking in the manuscript.

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Personally, my efforts are confined to the work of giving an opinion as to contemporary France, and after fifteen months of preparatory research I find the subject over-vast, and hardly know whether I shall be able to attempt it. Were a man as accustomed as yourself to the search of critical truth, and as proficient in the art of *mise-en-scène* to attempt this task, he would find his trouble well repaid.

As yet my inquiries have been fruitless as to the name of my Englishwoman. She was a young lady who was travelling with a widowed young Marquise when detained by the authorities.

The director of the Archives at Arras is kindly looking up the lists of prisoners at the time, but the registers are partly missing, and she only stayed a short time in that prison.

Her longest detention was at Amiens; the Archivist at Amiens to whom I forwarded my book and my inquiries has not yet sent me a reply.

To Monsieur Charles Ritter.

Châtenay, May 1, 1872.

SIR,—The volume you were kind enough to order to be sent to me has not yet arrived . . . but let me thank you for it in advance. Renan's article upon it in the *Débats* has made me greatly wish to read it. I need not tell you that the political opinions of Strauss and his declamations against France will not in the least bias me against him as a writer. Besides his large books, I know a few of his shorter works. He is remarkably conciliatory towards both science and religion. You know that here in France,

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as in most non-Protestant countries, this mental attitude is not often found ; those who abandon Catholicism for Free-thought cannot always find any intermediate position. All the more reason, therefore, that one should be shown to us, and this means that I consider your book of interest to all French readers, and that I hope for it all the success that it deserves. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, August 5, 1872.

I met Monsieur Mascart at Rossillon—the son-in-law of Monsieur Briot. He had just been holding the Examination in Physics for the École Normale at Cluny. The young fellows there are being educated as theorists—scientific dabblers—and need a more practical outlook. Consequently they are all Radicals and Socialists. . . .

. . . Bordeaux is running after Gambetta. He is just the man for the Southerners. My impression is that in the last year two things have made decided progress here in France,—Radicalism and Clericalism. Between the two of them there is no room for moderate Liberals.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, August 9, 1872.

I was present yesterday at a rather pleasant little prize-giving at the schools, and made a short speech on the new lending-library. The ceremony was held in a tent, and it was raining, so, like the illustrious Gambetta, I had great difficulty in contending with the tumult of the elements. . . .

Yesterday, too, I looked in at the office of the *Débats*. Thiers is considered there to be stronger than ever ; it

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is probable that with the new session a great part of the Right will rally round him and make a majority for him, so as not to give it to the Left.

The Imperialists say that they mean to leave him alone for the next two or three years, when his day will be over ; then will come Gambetta and Co., then the Prince Imperial, who will be twenty within four years' time, and just ready to play the part of knight-errant.

I have been reading *Evelina* and *Rachel Gray*. Miss Burney's *Evelina* had an enormous success about the year 1780 ; it is insipid and rings false. A hundred years does little as a rule to raise an author's reputation, yet it is worth while to compare *Evelina* with a modern novel. What a change in manners and customs ! It is one of the last productions of the old aristocratic formal world in which *les convenances* and etiquette counted as everything. There was plainly some necessity for etiquette in those days, the general tone being so very coarse. Without having read the books of that time, especially those of Fielding and of Smollett, it is impossible to realize the coarseness of the age. The French alone were really polished then. Education has more influence on other nations than on France ; the French character is rarely influenced and restrained.

Should I succeed in writing my book, it may perhaps be read, but it will prove of little benefit. Mallet du Pan, Rivarol, Malouet, with all their talent, influence and fame, prophesied faithfully at each new phase of the Revolution, yet in vain. In politics and morals alike the French are led only by the passions and the interests of the moment ; they will only believe what it suits them to believe.

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To Ernest Renan.

Lagny, September 9.

. . . Since you offer me a column I accept it gratefully. I would rather have a column of yours than a long article by anybody else.

I know that you have not taken up psychology, but you were good enough to tell me that *l'Intelligence* had modified your views upon the subject, and that after having despised all verbal classifications of current theories, you were now disposed to attach more importance to the matter. This is all that is necessary; later on I shall hope to see you writing upon it.

The novelty of the book consists in three things—

First, in the facts employed; observations taken of children and madmen, pathological and physiological experiments, and various small phenomena forming a connected argument.

Secondly, in the general suppression of the entities—those of the old *idéologues* as of the contemporary spiritualists,—forces, faculties,—replacing them by the real and positive alone.

Thirdly, in the metaphysical conclusions, the individual being conceived but as a series of events, and all the events of nature as being but different forms of thought in different degrees of complication, of which movement is the most simple (Aristotle).

I leave aside what can best be dealt with by specialists, viz., the theory of signs, images, outward perception, memory, and axioms *à priori*. This last alone can be of interest to you, for if the analysis that I present be correct there is nothing left of your beloved Kant (you know that

all his arguments start from the assumption that there is such a thing as synthetical judgment *à priori*, whereas I have tried to prove step by step that this is a latent analytical judgment).

The waters here are doing me much good. I have taken twenty baths within the last ten days. Swimming is a pastime for the gods, and makes one think of Homer's Olympus.

To Madame H. Taine.

Lagny, September 11, 1872.

I am still idling rather ; but I have been re-reading the articles of Sainte-Beuve on the eighteenth century, the Revolution, and the modern epoch, all of which agrees with my former impressions, but my memory is as languid as the rest of me, and I no longer enjoy my old vividness of impression, though in these quiet surroundings I am getting a better grasp of things as a whole.

On my return I shall write a study of Stendhal, which will be more easy, and postpone the writing of my big book, as I have not yet read enough. The notes of Sainte-Beuve tell me of other documents, and I hope to profit by them as I regain my intellectual vigour.

I am also reading Baron Percy's manuscript,¹ and see with regret that the men at Jena in 1807, and in Spain, 1808, were as thievish as the Prussians, quite as brutal, and far greater drunkards. They did not even steal with method, for the purpose of sending help to their families

¹ The *Memoirs of Baron Percy*, a surgeon in the Imperial Army, had been left by will to his nephews, neighbours of M. Bezancon at Lagny. As they attached no value to them, Taine probably saved these papers from destruction, and he re-aroused such interest in them that they have now been published by Plon.

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at home, but simply stole and pillaged out of sheer wantonness like mischievous urchins. At Eylau and Friedland in 1807 they plundered the wounded and robbed each other with all the selfish brutality then so marked a feature.

For conquerors as for conquered the wars of the Empire abounded in horrors. It was not till towards 1830, when details began to be forgotten in the general effect of strategy and big movements, that they excited admiration.

Here is another curious thing to note, but of quite a different character. Yesterday I came across a Belgian merchant who has been living in Paris for the last ten years. He was a long time in Holland, and six years ago he translated some old Flemish for my lectures. It was with his assistance that I got up the article on Holland about which I told you. He says that Dutch women-servants are paid from sixty to a hundred florins a year, and that they are very hard-working and well-conducted through the year, with the exception of two or three days each September. They then obtain their "Kermesse" gifts, about ten florins generally, and flock to the great fairs from all directions. At Amsterdam, for instance, in the market-place and at the waffle-sellers the coarsest revels are carried on, quite in the Rubens style . . . but at the end of the fair the girls go back to their eleven and three-quarter months of hard work and sobriety.

To Madame H. Taine.

Lagny, September 11, 1872.

I have read through Surgeon Percy's papers. The sentiments then engendered by warfare were not at all like those of our time. After Friedland and Tilsit, not only did the Emperors and the King of Prussia meet and embrace, but

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the French officers gave a grand dinner in their camp to the Russian and the Prussian officers, and, still more astonishing, the French soldiers held high revels in a meadow with the soldiers of the two other nations ; there was drinking and intoxication, but no quarrelling, no recrimination ; it was like the closing festivities of a friendly joust.

In those days war was carried on by princes, not by nations ; it was only after 1808 in Spain, 1809 in Germany, 1812 in Russia, that popular feeling became at all inflamed.

“ The Emperor,” says Percy, who was an eye-witness, “ is made of iron, soul and body ; always on horseback, galloping about in all weathers, bivouacking, working like ten men, never ill, never tired. The confidence and admiration he inspires is absolute. Yet the soldiery is tired now, after Eylau, and we all are growing homesick.”

The acquirement of a medal was then all-powerful as incentive, and the traditions of the regiment, the *esprit de corps* in general, was very much in evidence.

To Georges Brandès.

Paris, November 18, 1872.

. . . I have very little information to give you as to what you ask of me. The short extract from Sainte-Beuve to which you allude is the most instructive. France borrowed but very little from Germany in her literature of the Restoration period. English, not German, was the study then in vogue, and generally speaking the movement was spontaneous and original, quite independent of the analogous and anterior movement in Germany.

The first among us to take up the study of German with any serious intent were Gérard de Nerval, who translated

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Goethe's *Faust*, and Philarète Chasles, who translated several articles. The language, the structure of sentences, the abstract terminology, the absence of direct deduction, does not attract the Frenchman's sympathy.

From time to time some isolated work—or Niebuhr, Herder, Kant, Beck—found a translator and was read by the curious and the specialist, but the German author rarely had much influence here; he was not assimilated by the French reading public. Renan and Heine were really the first to introduce German ideas into France, the former by his original re-treatment and exquisite style, the latter by his plastic lucidity and by the general impression he gives of being a demon in bad health.

Joseph de Maistre knew the German language, but did not study it till late in life. I hardly think that he was much indebted to German thought. De Tocqueville also took it up in his later years, but as an accomplishment, not as an education. Monsieur Guizot learned it in his youth and made use of it for his *Histoire de la Civilisation en France et en Europe*. He studied Savigny, but any German influence upon his mind was very slight. He told me three years ago that since the days of Ottfried Müller all the historical theories of the Germans, including Mommsen's history, have been over-fanciful constructions, themes *à priori* elaborated by the learned in the seclusion of their studies. His is quite an English turn of mind.

It can, I think, be affirmed that with one or two exceptions the French have borrowed little from the Germans; the distance between the two spheres of thought is too great to be easily traversed, especially in what concerns literature, religion, wit, and human nature generally.

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On the technical and positive side it is otherwise, however ; our philologists, physiologists, physicians, botanists, etc., have studied the Germans with advantage. We can agree upon a formula, an experiment, a concrete study ; it is in general views and sentiments that we find ourselves at different poles.

I even venture to say that the Germans find more difficulty in grasping our point of view than we do as regards theirs. Take for instance Hettner's judgment on Voltaire in his *History of Eighteenth Century Literature*.

You do not give me your address. I hope that this letter may reach you notwithstanding.

To the Editor of the "Journal des Débats."

Paris, December 19, 1872.

SIR,—It was a saying of Laubardemont's that a man can well be hanged upon the evidence of two lines of his handwriting. To-day I am realizing the truth of this.

At a meeting of the National Assembly on December 16 Monsieur Naquet remembered this on his own behalf, though not on mine. He considers "that morality, merit and demerit are but accidents of constitution," "that there is no more demerit in being evil-minded than there is in being one-eyed or humpbacked," and he asserts on the strength of a passage in my Introduction to the *History of English Literature* that I have the same opinion.

I have never had the same opinion, and any one who cares to consult the passage will easily see that its significance is quite other. It stands as follows :

"Whether physical or moral, all things can be accounted for. There are causes that produce ambition, courage,

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veracity, just as there are causes for digestion, muscular movement, and animal heat. Vice and virtue are products, just as vitriol and sugar are products, and every complex assumption has its origin in the union of other and more simple assumptions."

This does not in the least imply that one must look for these simple assumptions among the "accidents of constitution," in the structure and the play of bodily organism; it would be quite useless there to seek them; none but phrenologists attach spiritual signification to bumps. As becomes evident in the five volumes following the statement, in the history of a great nation and of a large number of its individuals, all that it implies is that all kinds of moral tendencies, qualities or talents, such as we recognize easily at sight, have as their immediate cause other tendencies or qualities more simple and more easy to distinguish. Saint Louis and Marcus Aurelius are two of the most virtuous princes this world has ever seen. One may surely note that the tender piety and almost ecstatic imagination of the one, and the philosophic and stoical tendencies of the other, must have largely contributed to strengthen the love of justice in each.

Barrère was a great rascal, Saint-Just a mischievous fanatic. One can observe in Barrère the influence of the southern frivolity of temperament in a naturally clever but insincere and shallow man; while in Saint-Just one sees the effect of the ignorance, boldness and over-excitement engendered by solitude upon a mind irredeemably narrow.

To say that vice and virtue are products, as vitriol and sugar are products, is not to say that they are chemical

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products like vitriol and sugar ; they are moral products created by the union of moral elements, and just as it is necessary to know the chemical matters of which vitriol is composed in order to make it or unmake it, so is it useful in order to give man a hatred of falsehood, to seek the psychological elements which by their combination produce veracity.

Applied to present day matters, such for instance as the analysis of the revolutionary or the clerical spirit, similar study would doubtless prove illuminating, showing like motives in both, such as a love of ready-made principles and phrases, an ignorance of history, a distrust of experience, a tendency towards tyranny, with an aptitude for slavery. This would lead to the conclusion that the one cannot be successfully combated by the other, and that both need resisting.

The analysis once made would in no wise lead towards indifference. The criminal would not find excuse because his evil tendencies were understood ; however well one knows the chemical composition of vitriol one does not pour it in one's tea. The evil man deserves blame, disdain and punishment, the good man is worthy of respect and recompense. A humpback is not admitted in the army, a confirmed evil-doer should be excluded from society.

To Th. Ribot.

Paris, January 11, 1873.

DEAR SIR,—I have just read Spencer's theory as to nervous shock. It is precisely what I wrote in the *Intelligence* ; vol. i, pp. 202-219.

Firstly, he employs, as I do, the instance of sound

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sensation. Secondly, he lays equal stress upon Helmholtz's explanation of timbre. Thirdly, he concludes, as I do (*see* page 278), that the sensations of the different senses are probably combinations of the same elementary combination. Fourthly, he supports the conclusion (p. 154) on the reason I have just alleged (p. 279). Fifthly, he uses the same chemical comparison that I do (Spencer, p. 155; *De l'Intelligence*, p. 203).

I am not indebted to Spencer for my argument, as none of this appeared in the first edition of his psychology.

Two hypotheses remain as to which I beg for your enlightenment. Did Spencer arrive at this theory as to nervous shock by independent means? It seems hardly probable in view of its great resemblance to my own. Did he, as his second preface seems to indicate, publish the pamphlet containing this theory before the first of March, 1870? And does his actual book but reprint this pamphlet?

On the other hand, did he borrow his theory from my work on *Intelligence*. In his second preface he says that *l'Intelligence* has introduced some of his dominant ideas to public knowledge in France. This is inexact. Those from whom I have borrowed are John Stuart Mill and Bain, ("Induction, muscular sensation giving the idea of extent,") and these too I have quoted at length. I have borrowed nothing of Spencer but one phrase (ii. 137) on the muscular sensations of the eye considered as symbols of the muscular sensations of the locomotive members.

I find in this second and very altered edition of his psychology numerous resemblances to mine, for instance, in what he says of cerebral phenomena as movements "par leur face objective," and as sensations, ideas, etc., "par

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leur face subjective." This is almost word for word my own formula (i. 365).

Pray pardon all this revindication, but in reading the English reviews I see that they are treating my work as a mere imitation, a French transcription of English theories. Stuart Mill, in an article written in June, 1870, quite recognized my work as entirely original, and this, in my opinion, is evident in the method employed, and in the theories of details and generalities.

To take a leading instance, I differ altogether from Spencer as to the fundamentals, and do not at all consider them unknowable either as to matter or to mind.

My conviction is that the only realities of nature are not forces, as Spencer says, but events, sensations, movements ; the forces being but the possibility or necessity of these events.

Heraclitus and Hegel stand most near me in their views ; my philosophy, from the very first, has always attacked the entities known as force and substance.

With regard to Bain, it is the same thing. Far from believing the primordial and elementary faculty of mind to be the perception of difference and resemblance, I consider this but an effect. . . .

To Hector Malot.

Paris, February 2, 1873.

DEAR SIR,—I am always at home every Tuesday afternoon, and should you be in my neighbourhood one of these days, pray do not forget me ; we see each other far too seldom, as I think.

It is not a trouble but a pleasure you have given me.

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Your two volumes (*La Belle Madame Dionis*) are being read by all I know and asked for in advance. This is quite literally true. I venture to dispense with formal politeness towards you.

I have found your book most fascinating,—the construction good, and the characters natural. Sainte-Austreberthe is excellent. . . . He should have been a statesman ; it is a pity he should remain but an intriguer.

Remember, though, that I am a student of psychology, and that character study is what I value most. Your portraits, consequently, well drawn as they are, seem to me to need a final touch. To Sainte-Austreberthe, for instance, you give all that is necessary for moral and intellectual delineation, yet something of the play of face and gesture, of sub-conscious thought, the vague something that fixes the type of man in the mind of the reader, this you do not care to give. Balzac used it over-conscientiously, but “to add a new individual to the State,” Henri de Marsay or Maxime de Trailles for instance.

Further, it seems to me that your grip might well be firmer, and that in real life things would work out more decisively. Janvier de la Motte, for instance, is far more developed than Monsieur de Cheylus ; call to mind the scene with the firemen. It almost seems that with such a strong reality before you, you have been afraid of being accused of exaggeration.

It is the same with Marthe. With her father, in the second scene, you make her out to be childishly perplexed ; with Philippe in the first scene she is a far stronger nature.

The Dionis,—Philippe Mériolles also,—need to be brought out in stronger relief. You try to tell your story through

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the actions and the speeches of the characters; in my opinion, the novelist has the right of closer contact, of describing mental states and feelings. Allow me to remind you of similar characters in Balzac,—Paul de Manerville and the two Graslins.

You have a remarkably fine scene at the end of the second volume, the interview of Madame Dionis with Mérielles, and then her death; it is all most true and touching. Yet the mental and moral agitation gone through by Madame Dionis in the foregoing months needs some dwelling on, and this you have omitted altogether.

You appear to me to be carried away by the action of your story. Your characters once set in motion and the situation indicated, the rest develops naturally; and this is well, but it seems to prevent your dwelling sufficiently upon your characters as individuals and developing them psychologically. This from an artistic point of view may possibly appear superfluous. Speaking, however, for myself, who am no artist but merely a student of zoology and physiology, this treatment would have much of interest, though I grant readily that my point of view may be wrong.

One word more. This last novel seems to me better than *Le Miracle*, but *Le Blessé* has my preference.

I know that you will forgive my free criticism.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, May 15, 1873.

. . . The new director of the Institute here is an Alsatian, and has been telling me some curious things about the Germans. Some German doctors who paid him a visit just before the war were astonished to find children in that part of the world who could read, write and calculate;

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they had imagined that in France there was no primary instruction at all. An officer from Munich was surprised to see at Sainte Odile a crowd of Alsatians who were laughing and talking freely. He said that in Munich people were convinced that Alsace was groaning under the oppression of the French, and that if he were to report exactly what he had seen he would be put down as a liar.

I have been reading Scribe. Those who used to like his plays were more easy to amuse than we are now. They were a light-hearted generation. The vaudeville is the last word of the old French badinage, our political and financial outlook does not inspire us to more. . . .

The garden here is delightful. . . . The ash-tree near the bench at the end is a mass of delicately scented green. . . .

I am not particularly cheerful in myself, for I have been obliged to begin my work again. I cannot see my way quite clearly yet, and at my twentieth page I felt that I was on the wrong track.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, May 22, 1873.

My past work has proved useless. As I told you last time, I have had to try a new track. My old power of discrimination seems to have left me, and instead of being able to seize upon the leading idea at a glance, I have to grope about for it in the dark. For the present I am reading up all I can, and letting the ideas arrange themselves. I am reading the *Memoirs of Madame d'Oberkirch* which I brought back from the Bibliothèque. To-morrow I am going to Paris about the *École des Sciences Politiques*. I shall also look up Hachette's in order to hurry the sale of

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my *Suffrage Universel* ; probably, too, I shall see Monsieur Sarcey, and if I have the time I shall go and see the Exhibition. So it will be a busy day.

Out of all my failures I have, however, gained something, and that is the conviction that the Revolution and the Empire were on the whole but a means for giving scope to the need of rising, of acquiring,—all in the name of an abstract political theory. To-day exactly the same thing is going on,—the Revolution or transfer to the poor of the riches of the rich, and that is why the Radicals are so strong.

Thiers's projects sound well, but Malouet, Mounier, Mallet du Pan, spoke just as well in 1789–1792.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, May 26, 1873.

Since you wish to have my opinion upon yesterday's events,¹ here it is. An invalid suffering from long-standing impurity of blood, had received some serious wounds. Thiers, as a well known doctor, takes him in hand, dresses his wounds, and at the end of two years only the scars remain. Gangrene, however, had set in owing to the trouble of the blood, and Thiers, denying that it was gangrene, tried to treat the evil with ointments and bandages. He has, however, just been dismissed to make room for new physicians, who are going to attempt a surgical operation. The question is, will they succeed ? is the patient at all able to be cured ? . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, May 29, 1873.

I went to Paris on Tuesday to see the Exhibition and to

¹ The fall of M. Thiers and the succession of Marshal MacMahon to the Presidency.

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attend my dinner. The political horizon seems clear. There has been a rise of three francs, and the financiers say that there will be another rise at the end of the month. Ernest Picard said to me at dinner that the only mistake had been in not having done this for the last two years. Even Schérer acknowledges that the matter has been carried out with great skill and tact.

Schérer, however, is still very irritated, and maintains that they are all clericalists, and that clericalism is the only bond between them. He is still as bitter as a Jansenist or as Camus in 1791, and cherishes an active hatred, not a theoretical hatred, towards Catholicism.

I pleaded with him on behalf of necessary compromise, but he declared that I was merely a student of individual interests while his own views embraced civilized humanity in general.

Schérer is a theorist. Picard a regular sceptic. He said universal suffrage, "It is impossible to suppress, difficult to mutilate, but it might be run away with."

There were some good landscapes at the Exhibition, an excellent portrait of Monsieur Dufaure by Mlle. Jacquemart, and two good portraits by Cabanel. There was also a very dramatic thing by Neuville (the man who is illustrating Guizot's *History of France*), the taking of a house at Bazeilles, he calls it *Les Dernières Cartouches*. Another scene, *Le Jour du Paiement des Fermages*, was very clever and well finished, like one of Gérard Dows's. But there was nothing very striking.

I am alone at Châtenay. Before setting to work again on the *Revolution*, which is quietly developing in my solitude and silence, I wrote a rather long preface to *l'Intelligence*.

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In the review of Germier-Baillière a long and favourable article appeared by Léon Dumont. It showed me, however, that I have been wrong in not indicating my own original views and discoveries in my preface, as they are being either misunderstood or not attributed to me personally.

I am trying to make this good, and am also realizing that history, however interesting, has not the same fascination for me as psychology.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, June 1, 1873.

. . . There is no political upset to be feared. I count at least on two months of tranquillity, and the Chamber will now last over another year. There is hope of ultimate settlement, and the elections, through the mere presence of a Conservative government, must turn out better, for the Conservatives will now give in their votes, which hitherto they have refrained from doing.

The flood has been stemmed and no damage done; such a thing has not been seen since the days of Casimir-Perier in 1831. It was rumoured that Audiffret-Pasquier was going to secede, but read his to-day's speech as chosen leader of the Right Centre.

The present Government has the following to fear :

Firstly, the papal and Italian affairs, consequently those of Germany as well.—Now Monsieur de Broglie has just announced that nothing will be changed as regards foreign policy, and Monsieur Thiers only fell through a home question.

Secondly, the division of the victors. It need not be

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feared just yet, as the danger that united them is still above the horizon. MacMahon serves as balancer, and the three rival dynasties balance one against the other. The Bonapartes can only return to power after a great national convulsion, and in my opinion this will be delayed by the new events. In short, the mere fact of the present party being in power rallies round it, both in and out of the Chamber, a number of the undecided who naturally follow the successful.

The third danger lies in the constitutional laws, more especially in the electoral law. These will bring divisions and attacks, particularly from the Left, but the disease lies here, and any effective treatment must come from our present leaders. I fear though that they will not take the risk.

Mr. John Durand, of New York, dines with me to-morrow. American publishers are trying to get me to sell them my book ; translated by an American, it is under the protection of the law.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, June 5, 1873.

I travelled back on Tuesday with M. Beslay. . . . Negotiations are under way. The Extreme Right absolutely refused to discuss the third constitutional law as to the executive power and the transmission of this power ; they are all blind monarchists. The Left Centre clings to this law as the completion of the Republic. The Government will, therefore, try to steer its way through both.

The first bill discussed will probably be the one on the organization of the army, which will bring M. Thiers into conflict with the Left.

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Another very important bill is on municipal organization, which means giving all the higher classes and leading tradesmen a voice in local government.

I met Monsieur Joubert in the street; he has just returned from Italy. He and Beslay think that the Italian Government will do everything to propitiate the next Pope; it is hoped that he will be fairly Liberal.

The more I think of life, the more it seems to me like launching out to sea in a frail boat,—the weather is always uncertain and one has no one to depend upon but oneself, and oneself is not always quite reliable. If I were a religious man I should say: May God guide and help us! All that we can do is to add our small endeavours to His aid.

I am still making and unmaking my plans for my book, . . . but I need time, silence and solitude to mend the mind that was worn out. . . . I have to make about twenty bad attempts at what I used to do well at the first start. I think I now see my plan for the second chapter; the third I have already.

To Madame H. Taine.

Châtenay, June 18, 1873.

. . . I have been reading Renan's *Ante Christ*. It is interesting, lofty, and shows great erudition, but the subject is always at fault, with its lack of proper evidence, and its gaps and its conjectures. Then, too, all these Early Christians are such inferior creatures, so like low-class Methodists or the converted negroes of America, that one grows weary of their jeremiads and their hallucinations.

What a pity that he did not write the history of the Caesars from Augustus to Nero, for which work the

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documentary evidence and the human interest suffice. The real interest of his book consists in what he says of Nero, Rome, and the taking of Jerusalem.

The political situation is not attractive. We live from hand to mouth. I foresee danger from two reefs, one the Papal and Italian question, the other the return to the old University methods. The first may be escaped, but I have small hope for the other. Patin and M. Cuvillier-Fleury think that their own was the only right kind of education.

To Max Müller.

Châtenay, July 3, 1873.

SIR,—I have received the *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, and have just had the *Lectures on Darwin's Philosophy of Language*, for which I tender you my best thanks.

The *Lectures* have greatly struck me. Not only do you speak with admirable clearness, leading the ordinary reader with most exquisite art towards the loftiest questions and their solutions, but your solutions are of real service to the inquirer, especially in the last lecture on the subject of interjections and imitative sounds. I thank you for it as for a personal obligation. It seems to me that it should be inserted in your *Lectures on the Science of Language* which otherwise would remain incomplete.

Since you have done me the honour of accepting a copy of my *l'Intelligence* you will perceive that my opinion on the human mind and on the philosophy of Kant differs from your own, approaching more nearly to the views held by Bain and Stuart Mill.¹

¹ Max Müller replied to this: "In most parts I agree with you. It seems to me that Kant's system is much stronger without the

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In my opinion there is no such thing as synthetic judgment *à priori*, what Kant calls by this term being disguised analytic judgment, and I have taken particular pains to prove this. As, from his standpoint, this is the chief problem science presents, you will be able to judge of the difference in our conclusions.

As to your theory on the inseparability of words and of general conceptions, and on the impossibility of thinking without names mentally pronounced or heard or visualized, I go with you entirely, and in the first book of *l'Intelligence* have tried to give the cause.

In my opinion the cause lies in the fact that what we call ideas, conceptions, and general notions, are merely signs, each of these signs having the property of awakening in us a more or less clear representation of the individuality of the class, and of these individuals alone; further, that each has the property of being evoked in us by the perception or the representation of the individuals of that class, and of that class alone.

I admit as you do that the faculty of forming and employing these general conceptions and terms is the characteristic of the human race, and I am glad to see that philology and psychology are leading to the same conclusions.

I should not, however, venture to draw from this the same arguments against Darwin as you do, for this superior and characteristic faculty is, like all other mental faculties, dependent upon the structure of the encephalon.

admission of the possibility of synthetic judgments *à priori*. The admission of the reality of such judgments seems to me to contradict Kant's own principles quite as much as the admission of the reality of the *Ding in Sich*, etc."

The naturalist can define this condition with precision, as it consists in the greater development of the cerebral hemispheres, and especially of the grey *husk*. I have, I think explained the utility of this development which increases the number of repeaters of the sensitive centres (ll. 329, 330). If the cerebral hemispheres of a monkey were to develop in a manner at all approaching that of our own, the monkey would speak and would have general conceptions such as we have. If the brain of a microcephalous idiot had not stopped in its evolution the idiot would not be what he is, namely a brute creature incapable of articulate language. If the brain of the most stupid peasant were to become like that of Gauss, the peasant would develop into a mathematician like Henri Mondeux or young Colbarn.

In my opinion the difference between man and brute, between microcephalous idiot and normal man, between the man of limited ability and the man of genius, the Darwin, the Eugène Burnouf, the Goethe, the Newton,—is everywhere the same, call it passable or not as one will. It is impassable if the brain remains unaltered; neither the animal nor the idiot will ever learn to speak or to conceive of generalities with insufficient brain machinery, nor can the ordinary man succeed, however great his efforts and however good his teachers, in understanding the “Prologue in Heaven,” of Goethe’s *Faust*, or Newton’s *Principia*.

If, however, the encephalon and the nervous system in general be taken into consideration one can no longer assert that the difference is unalterable, for it is quite evident that if one admits the various cerebral and nervous types of animals to be diversities of one and the same type, that of man only differs from that of monkey by slight shades,

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far less than the monkey's brain differs from that of bird and fish.

I beg of you to allow me to translate the last seven or eight pages of your third lecture in order to be able to quote the passage in my next edition of *l'Intelligence*. It is worth borrowing.

With grateful memories of your kindness to me at Oxford,
I remain very truly yours.

To Th. Ribot.

Châtenay, July 6, 1873.

SIR,—I delayed my answer to your letter until I had read your book.¹ Accept my warmest congratulations. I can well imagine that the Faculté has found itself puzzled; in fact I saw by the account in Germer-Bailliére's review that you had not been understood, the author of the article is labouring under the same difficulties as your critic. Such is the fate of all new ideas, they cannot get into brains already occupied, with no room for new contents.

I had read the book of Prosper Lucas, and as far as I can judge you are quite right in admitting of but one force, heredity. If I dissent at all from you it is, perhaps, upon your almost unqualified acceptance of all Herbert Spencer's ideas. I learn with pleasure from Germer-Bailliére that you are translating his *Principles of Biology*; it is his masterpiece. But his *Principles of Psychology* and his *First Principles* seem to me far too metaphysical; he is always deep in hypotheses, always explaining not how things are actually accomplished, but how it is possible that they might be accomplished. Nothing is more interesting and

¹ Ribot's *Essay on Heredity*.

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ingenuous than his theory of universal evolution and his treatment of progressive differentiations.

Yet to my mind there is something of romance in all this, just as I find in Hegel or in Schopenhauer. Darwin goes as far as I can follow; beyond this, especially when Haeckel leads the way, I have to stop, for the ground is no longer firm beneath my feet. I have the same impression when studying Spencer's negations after considering his affirmations. For instance, on p. 101 you adopt his theory of the unknowable. Now it is absolutely necessary to be in complete accord as to the signification of the verb "to know." If, as I have endeavoured to point out, thought in all its forms be a composition of sensations or of those repetitions of sensation which we designate as images, it is perfectly "knowable," in the sense that we can mark the group of fixed characteristics which distinguish it from all other things. If, as I have also tried to show, the general sensation of which we are conscious be a composition of elemental sensations, etc., it is "knowable" in the sense that we can point out its elements and the elements again of these.

In short, if, as I have tried to render probable, these elemental sensations can ultimately be reduced to simple molecular movements, this will then mean that the remotest mysteries of sensation will be understood, since a given movement is in itself but a series of movements, just as a given quantity is but an amalgamation of quantities. You will tell me that the infinitesimal is unknowable. Surely not! since we can put it into equations and prove all its properties.

All this, however, detracts in no way from the excellence

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and the value of your book. I am glad to hear that you are studying physiology,—there is nothing more psychological. At your age and with your equipment the future before you in this direction is a great one. No one, my dear Sir, will follow your career with greater sympathy and hope than myself.

Yours very faithfully.

CHAPTER IV

L'ANCIEN RÉGIME

First Visit to Savoy—Purchase of the Property of Menthon-Saint-Bernard—First Candidature for the Académie Française—Revision of *L'Ancien Régime*—Articles—Lectures at Geneva—Publication of *L'Ancien Régime*—Correspondence

DURING the summer of 1873, M. Taine made a stay on the shores of the lake of Annecy, which led in the following year to his definite establishment in that neighbourhood. He and his family spent some weeks on the charming estate of Thoron which has been described by André Theuriet in his novel *Amour d'Automne*.¹

In the following spring, his uncle, Monsieur Bezançon, announced his intention of getting rid of his house of Boringe at Menthon-Saint-Bernard, and this was bought by Taine, who found great pleasure in his acquisition. He had always wished to have a country house of his own, and had very English ideas upon the subject, considering that a large town like London or Paris was not adapted for permanent residence, but only as a field of action for business, pleasure,

¹ Thoron now belongs to M. Gustave Noblemaire.

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and ambition, while the brain-worker only needed to make short sojourns there in order to obtain the documents and the exchange of ideas necessary for his work. The events of 1870 and 1871 had confirmed him in his views ; he was consequently well pleased to have a quiet retreat in which to pursue his task without fear of political agitation or the intrusion of the unsympathetic visitor.

He took with him to Savoy all his books and the beloved engravings that had adorned the modest study of his younger days, and fitted up a house according to his taste, very simple, but large enough for hospitality to his friends and relations and specially to the mother who for forty years had been his faithful companion.

To the delightful scenery of the Lac d'Annecy he became much attached, and for the next nineteen years he spent here the greater part of his time. Sheltered from the unforeseen interruptions which are the great trial of the brain-worker in a large town, Taine could now regulate his life according to his wishes. The early hours of the day he devoted to literary work, only quitting his writing table for short walks in his garden while seeking for ideas or an expression. At lunch time he often entered the dining-room quite automatically, as if lost in meditation ; his family would always respect his need of silence, and would wait quietly until he gave the signal for conversation, which was never long delayed. His manner was as genial and his conversation as interesting and sustained when alone with his family, as when a visitor was present at the table ; he enjoyed developing with them the ideas suggested by his work and his family had thus the pleasure of sharing in his work. After lunch he took a short siesta, and then

read or wrote till four or five o'clock, when he would take about two hours' walk into the country, stopping to chat on the way with the farmers about the crops or the topics of the day. During the warm weather he would take swimming exercise in the lake, sometimes boating instead of going for his usual walk. Of an evening, tired after a well-spent day, he could cast aside all absorbing thought and relax his mind at cards or by sharing in the children's games. He always retired early in order to be able to give the mornings to his work.

Tainé's geniality gained him popularity at Menthon, where he was soon elected for the municipal committee, though he would never consent to accept the office of Mayor. He always took an active part in the deliberations of the Local Board, and was much struck by the complicated machinery of the administration and by the lack of adaptability shown by the town authorities towards the country communes.

It took him some time to understand the first budget submitted to his inspection, and when at last he finally grasped it, it was with the feeling that he was the only one on the committee who did. This experience proved very useful to him in writing his *Régime Moderne*.

In 1873 the friends of M. Tainé persuaded him to offer himself as candidate for election in the Académie Française, where three seats, those of MM. Lebrun, Saint-Marc Girardin and Vitet, were then vacant. Guizot, Emile Augier, Legouvé, de Lacy and several others were anxious for his admission. For some time Tainé hesitated. The agitations of an academic campaign by no means appealed to him, and he had encountered such difficulty

over his *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise* as to make him disinclined to face more criticism. However he yielded to persuasion and offered himself as candidate for one of the seats left vacant by Saint-Marc Girardin and Vitet, that of M. Lebrun having been already given to Alexandre Dumas.

Taine desired to succeed Saint-Marc Girardin, whom he had known both socially and at the office of the *Débats*. The *combinazione* of his academic patrons decided otherwise, however, dividing their votes between the two vacancies, which was a fault in tactics, so that on the day of the election, January 29, 1874, MM. Caro and Mezières gained the victory by a large majority.

Taine had not expected success, and accepted defeat with good grace. He had already begun his revisal of *L'Ancien Régime*, and much absorbed in his work, had no great interest in other things. For the next two years he devoted himself to it entirely, letting nothing but his lectures distract his attention and giving up all evening society as well as his critical articles. During this period nothing of his appeared in the *Journal des Débats* but an account of the latest philosophical works of Ribot, Bain, and Herbert Spencer, and an article on the three novelists most esteemed by him,—Alphonse Daudet, then in the zenith of success, Ferdinand Fabre, and Hector Malot, still little known.

A few lines were also written by him upon Charles Gleyre, to whom he afterwards devoted more attention. This eminent Vaudois artist was one of the most intimate friends of M. Denuelle, and when death surprised him at the Alsace-Lorraine Exhibition the sad duty fell to Taine of having the body transported to the humble studio of the Rue du Bac, where so many illustrious men had met.

Taine was fond of comparing Charles Gleyre with Franz Woepke, and the memory of the man he had loved so well had thus bound him more closely to the still unrecognized artist.

Towards the close of 1875 Taine wrote a short article for the *Débats* in order to announce the appearance of two new Reviews, the *Revue Historique* and the *Revue Philosophique*, which were started by his friends, Gabriel Monod and Th. Ribot. To the second of these he frequently contributed, and it was here that in the following winter the psychological notes appeared which were afterwards inserted in the third edition of *l'Intelligence*.

The *Ancien Régime*, however, was by now nearly completed. Taine had already read the first and third chapters to the students at the École des Sciences Politiques, and the University Council of Geneva expressed a wish that he should give a series of lectures upon it. From Annecy the journey was an easy one. The lectures were therefore held during the months of October and November, 1875, while the book was going through the press. Taine found himself welcomed at Geneva by his friend Marc Monnier with the same cordiality shown by him in Naples, and his sojourn was a very pleasant one. Among the well known men there met by him were Ernest Naville, Alphonse de Candolle, Hornung, Gautier, Blondel de Marignac, Antoine Carteret and Karl Vogt. He also met, for the first time, M. Hyacinthe Loyson¹ who was endeavouring, though

¹ Charles Loyson, known as Father Hyacinthe, was elected *Curé* of Geneva in February, 1873, at the time of the banishment of Mgr. Mermillod. He resigned his post in the following year on account of the religious dissension in the canton of Geneva.

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unsuccessfully, to implant Old Catholicism upon Genevan soil.

The first edition of *L'Ancien Régime* appeared December 9, 1875.

To Monsieur Guizot.

Châtenay, July 12, 1873.

. . . You are most kind in expressing the wish that Châtenay were nearer Val Richer ; it would be a source of great happiness to me, especially just now.

I have nearly finished all my reading on the French Revolution, and should be only too glad to submit my conclusions to a practical politician. In my opinion the most astounding characteristic of that period is to be found in the prevailing ideas upon man and society, ideas extraordinarily false and altogether out of harmony with what was being taught by Voltaire, Montesquieu, Buffon, and other leading minds of the time. It was admitted that man in the abstract—the primitive and natural man,—was in himself essentially good and reasonable, and thereupon they proceeded to weave an idyll. This conclusion passes in general as a necessary consequence of eighteenth century philosophy. All that I can say, however, is that it cannot be accepted by the scientific. Science, as soon as she becomes exact, ceases to be revolutionary, becoming even anti-revolutionary. Zoology shows us man's carnivorous teeth ;—let us beware of awakening in him his carnivorous and ferocious instincts. Psychology shows us that human reason is based on words and images ;—let us beware of provoking in him hallucination, madness. We are told by political economy that there is continual dispro-

portion between population and sustenance ;—let us not forget that even in a time of peace and prosperity, the struggle for life is ever going on, and remember not to exasperate it. History proves to us that state, government, religion, church, all public institutions, are the only means by which wild and animal man obtains his small share of reason and of justice ;—let us beware of destroying the flower by cutting at the root.

In short, it appears to me that general science tends towards prudence and conservatism, not towards revolution, and for proof of this we need but to study the delicate complexity of the social body. This will easily defend us from all charlatanism and general panaceas, radical or simple. A Claude Bernard will but smile when a Raspail proposes to cure everything with camphor and alcohol.

My apologies for this dissertation ! I am much interested in all this. All that I want to say is that our methods, far from separating us from each other, are drawing us into closer relation. . . .

To Georges Brandés.

*Le Thoron, par Menthon (Lac d'Annecy, Haute-Savoie),
July 25, 1873.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Your book and your letter reached me just as I was leaving Paris for this place, and I wished to read the book ¹ before replying to your letter.

Let me first thank you for the honour you have done me in your dedication. On many points I notice the conformity of our views, and I see that you have been good enough to

¹ Vol. ii of the German translation of *Grands Courants Littéraires du XIX Siècle*.

quote three or four pages from my *l'Intelligence*. I have been at work upon a third edition, where you will find, I hope, much that is new and suggestive.

I know the French and English romanticists better than the German ones, but I am quite of your opinion as to this attitude of mind. Hugo, in France, is a belated representative, and with the exception of some two hundred verses, his *Contemplations* and his *Legende des Siècles* is a mixture of folly and parade; nothing is so little to my taste as this mystic charlatanism.

You have excellently followed and described this intellectual disease in all its consequences. The "*délire ambigueux*" is frequently complicated by melancholia, while nervous excitement, eccentricity or languor is at the bottom of it all. I have read Heinrich von Kleist, and think your criticism over-kind. When one invents such maniacs as Catherine and the Prince of Hombourg, one must let them speak as maniacs speak. Shakespeare alone has understood this art. *Michel Kohlhaas* is good, except in the second part, but here, as in the *Marquise*, what we term "style,"—that is to say the art of detail and effect,—is altogether lacking, a third-rate writer of the eighteenth century had much the same method of narration. Mérimée and Stendhal use language in quite different fashion, and I hope in thus speaking that I am not influenced by any national prejudice, for Tourguenief, the Russian, seems to me a writer of the highest order. Were all the German authors pounded together in a mortar nothing equivalent to his vitality could be extracted from them, and generally speaking I consider that except in verse, lyrical verse especially, the Germans cannot write.

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Goethe in *Wilhelm Meister* is, as regards style, in no wise superior to Madame Cottin. . . .

To M. Jules Soury.

Le Thoron, August 13, 1873.

MY DEAR SIR,—You have written for the *Temps* a very considerable and interesting article, and its end as well as its commencement reveals the poet in you as the complement of the man of science.

You have headed it with the title of my book (*l'Intelligence*), which you have been kind enough to mention several times. This is much honour for a psychological work,—to be quoted in a physiological essay. As a rule we psychologists are ignored by the biologists, who attach but small importance to our researches.

In this respect, and despite your kind interest, you have followed the teachings of your school of thought, at least so it seems to me. This, at any rate, is how I explain a reproach which, coming as it does from you, I feel intensely.

You attribute to me a “disdain of erudition,” and you blame me for not producing monographs. This is true if you speak of anatomical and physiological monographs, which are not in my line. As to monographs of psychology, sane or morbid, this is, however, not the case, as I have ransacked the entire collection of the *Annales Médico-psychologiques*. The novelty of my book consists in its being entirely composed of a number of small but significant facts and cases, individual observations, and descriptions of psychological functions, atrophied or hypertrophied. This method is explained in the preface and is followed throughout the whole course of the book, and it is in this

peculiarity of method that the book differs from those of Bain, Spencer, and Mill.

Generally speaking, I believe not only that there can be no science without erudition, but further that detail and positive experiment and observation form the most solid part of science and often survive elaborated theories. He who disdains these details and experiments deals in empty dissertations. You can understand from this opinion my unwillingness to be included under such a classification.

As to books upon anatomy and physiology, my book appeared in the beginning of the year 1870. I had studied, I believe, all that was known of these subjects at that date. The books and articles quoted by you are of later appearance, the iconography of Dr. Luys, on which you chiefly base your argument, dating from 1872.¹ I have this treatise now within my hands and should indeed find pleasure in the conviction of its reliability. We should then, instead of few and hazy notions, be possessed of a strong clear theory, a detailed map of a land of which till now we have known but some high peaks. One needs, however, the assurance that the new explorer has good eyesight, and that the journey he describes is within the bounds of possibility.

For the next edition of my book this treatise shall have my re-consideration. You know, however, that when one has to borrow from a document one needs to have one's mind at rest as to its veracity; a very skilful anatomist, a very expert micrographist, alone can be sure upon this point. Not being such myself, I had recourse to three experts, all

¹ Jules Bernard Luys, 1828-1897, was a brain specialist. Taine visited him frequently while he was experimenting in hypnotism.

well-known men with whom I had personal relations. One of these agreed ;—he is a dogmatist, a believer ; the other two denied, these being unbiassed seekers. I relied, therefore, more on them.

Personally I found it easy to judge of the trend of mind in Dr. Luys. His book is also too dogmatic. Gall used to speak in much the same authoritative fashion, and if my memory does not play me false, he goes as far as admitting that his treatise is a *schema*, according to the German method. . . .

Nothing, in short, authorizes me to consider his book as a conclusive study accepted by science, and I perceive already that he is being regarded by leading minds with more curiosity than confidence.

This, therefore, must be my excuse. We are not on the same ground as regards fundamentals. I see that you do not recognize psychology as an independent science. In my eyes, however, psychology is quite distinct from physiology, and in common with historical science forms a separate division, a division known to Ampère as that of neological science.

That mental phenomena can be traced to cerebral phenomena is probable, just as it is probable that life can be traced to chemical and physical phenomena. There is the same distinction between the biologist and the psychologist, —mode of procedure, training, trend of thought, all is special and distinct for each. For this reason I owe you gratitude for having only partially refused recognition to psychology, and therefore sign myself,

Very truly yours,

H. TAINE.

L'ANCIEN RÉGIME

To John Durand.

Paris, December 20, 1873.

. . . I have had your first letter, and am very glad to hear of your safe arrival. I strongly wish that circumstances permitted you to write the letters that we planned together. The best method, in my opinion, is to have small note books, each with its proper heading, and in which you could jot down of an evening the interesting occurrences, anecdotes and customs that you had come across during the day.

The headings could be as follows : —

1. Soil and climate, with their influences upon the physical temperament of the inhabitants, and consequently also upon their character.—You who are returning from Europe to the United States can study with fresh eyes any striking differences of aspect. You can observe the Germans and the Irish established in the country for two or three generations back, and you can endeavour to find out whether the extremes of climate and the superabundance of electricity in the atmosphere be not, perhaps, the cause of the restlessness characteristic of the American as opposed to Dutch and English sluggishness of temperament.

2. Home life. Relations between husband and wife both before and after marriage. Relations between parents and children.

3. Society and government.—Take some township as a general type, give the profession and the antecedents of the leading men, the salary and general profits of their positions, and some notion of how they fulfil their public duties.

4. Education.

5. Religion.

6. Moral attitude,—by which I mean the general idea of

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the individual citizen as to the building up of a fortune, with the employment thereof.

Do not feel obliged to put this into order at once. Merely jot down your observations under the above headings, or others that you may prefer, and you will find on reading them over that one theme leads naturally to another. In six months' time when your notes are complete you will be able to write letters summarizing all your gathered store of information. It is evident that you cannot expect to be able to explain your administration and your politics to a European without first giving him some notion as to the soil and climate of your country, also as to the general life and characteristics of the individual American citizen.

What you tell me of your administrators and legislators quite conforms to known precedent and to the nature of things. In a monarchical form of government the subtle intriguer is the successful man; in a republican country coarser measures gain the day. You can consequently form some notion as to the future in store for France should we become a democratic republic; our populace is far more ignorant than yours, there is more class jealousy and far less commonsense, being of French and not of English stock.

I have written about a hundred pages of the first volume of *L'Ancien Régime*, but was interrupted by the family matters of which I told you, also by the necessity of preparing my lectures and by my candidature for the Academy.

I shall not be able to resume work before the end of February, and should I purchase a country house in Savoy this will be another interruption.

However, as I want to do my best, I shall take my time about it. There will be four volumes, I should think, and

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the second will deal with the acute crisis of the Revolution up to the ninth of Thermidor, the death of Robespierre. I shall publish two volumes together. All this, however, depends on health and circumstances.

I hope that your private matters do not fetter your intellectual career; you know how interested I am in all that concerns you.

When you are in New York try to meet Wallace Wood, author of *Chronos, or Mother Earth's Biography*. You would like to exchange ideas with him; he is cultured, keen and Europeanized.

To M. F. Guizot.

December, 1873.

I have just re-discovered in the *Débats* the letter I wrote about "vitriol and sugar." It is dated December 19, 1872. I now forward it to you.

It is with great pleasure that I accept your kind offer about the *Histoire de France*. I only wish that the fourth volume had already appeared, as my present studies are especially concerned with the last epoch. I should feel less incompetent in dealing with French history if I could follow your guidance.

Believe me, etc.

H. TAINÉ.

P.S.—As I am accused of being a Bonapartist I feel morally obliged to attend the reception at the Princess Matilde's to-morrow evening. One must show some spirit in face of an accusation!

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To R. Ménard.¹

Paris, March 18, 1874.

MY DEAR MÉNARD,—I have just come from Baudry's,² but it is quite impossible to write anything about his new pictures as yet ; there are only four in his studio, all the rest are rolled up. It will be much better to wait for his exhibition at the École des Beaux-Arts in September, and still better to see the paintings in their proper positions. You must realize that the ceiling will be eighteen metres high and the eight large paintings fourteen metres; they can only be judged from the proper distance in order to get the right proportions. For instance, the feet of the single Muses are enormous, and must have the correct perspective. In the Orpheus and the Corybantes some portions are very finished and impressive, others much weaker, and this is intended to be so. I also want to see the proper effect of the Muses with their very modern faces and their very Michael-Angelesque figures. The contrast will probably be harmonized by distance.

Baudry tells me that you have an article ready to accompany the engravings you are going to insert in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. I am glad of this, as I really want to wait in order to be able to make a general review of Baudry and his artistic development, and consider that it is not yet time for a criticism of his *foyer*.

¹ René Joseph Ménard, 1827–1887, was an art critic.

² Paul Baudry, 1828–1886, was an artist, and a member of the Institut. M. Ménard had wished Taine to write an article for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, then edited by him, on Baudry's paintings for the Opera.

L'ANCIEN RÉGIME

My father-in-law desires to be remembered to you.

Believe me,

Very truly yours.

To Monsieur Émile Boutmy.

Menthon-Saint-Bernard, June 18, 1874.

MY DEAR BOUTMY,—General Favé is considered a very clever, broad-minded man. I advise you to accept his offer. Of course I know that his name is an advertisement, but we cannot do without eminent men, and it is always possible to balance this advantage. See how you can add to the list of patrons and members of the School in the way of Republicans and Monarchists; that will balance for the other side.

It must be clearly understood that General Favé¹ recognizes without reservation the purely scientific character of the school. He must not attempt propaganda of any sort, and must keep to neutral ground;—no sentiment about the late war, for instance. With these precautions his help would be very valuable to us, and you know better than most how much we shall need support in the difficult time before us.

We are all well here, and like the house and neighbourhood better than ever. There is always a room ready for you, and you know how much we all like to have you.

My mother is with us, also my father-in-law; he leaves for Paris on Sunday and returns about the fifteenth of July. Let me know the time of your arrival a few days beforehand.

¹ General Favé, 1812–1894, wrote on military subjects and was a member of the Institut. He proposed giving a course of lectures on military history at the École des Sciences Politiques. The proposal, however, came to nothing.

My book advances slowly, I have still great difficulty in writing, and get through about a page a day. Just now I am in the middle of the second chapter, that on social life. Altogether I have written five chapters, of which you have read the first. As yet I have no notion of the general effect, even upon myself personally, and shall only get a clear idea of it all when I have re-copied the whole thing.

I presume that the correspondence of the *Contrôleurs Généraux*, of which you tell me, is the work of M. de Boislisle. I shall need it for my last chapter,—could you lend it to me for a month?

What you quote of Bismarck makes me shiver! Do you know through Sorel anything as to the context? if so pray try to let me know it.¹

I am taking both the *Temps* and the *Français*, but like neither of them,—the *Temps* particularly not. Schérer seems to me a regular Condorcet. . . . One feels quite differently about public matters when one forsakes Paris and the literary world for the depths of the country, as I have done for the last month through my journey here and to the Ardennes. Profound indifference seems to prevail towards any sort of politics except what directly concerns one's money and career. I take it that if voiced the general feeling is: "Don't worry us. Give us any government you like, as long as it provides police and roads, but for heaven's sake let there be no quarrelling! We have far more serious things to think about, we have to consider our hay and our markets."

¹ Bismarck is reported to have said to Gontaut-Biron: "I shall not hesitate to attack you. We shall be prepared, and I know that you are not. I shall not delay."

France will accept whatever is imposed upon her, as long as she is allowed enough work and amusement.

You are more in a position to judge of things than I am but it seems to me that within a year's time, (unless Prussia upsets things generally,) either this Chamber or the next will bring in the Republic. The Republic will probably drag on its existence for, say, two years at least, and then we shall have the Empire.

*To Monsieur Arthur de Boislisle.*¹

Menthon-Saint-Bernard, July 26, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—It is doubtless to your kindness that I owe the fine volume (*Correspondence des Contrôleurs Généraux*) which I have received from the Ministry with a letter from M. Lefébure, Under-Secretary of State.

My father-in-law has just brought it here to me, and as yet I have but glanced through it, but I shall have to read it pen in hand, it is such a treasure house of information. A propos of this information, may I ask whether you can direct me to similar documents at the Archives upon the forty years preceding 1789? This is what I need for the last chapter of my first volume, my study of the misery of the taxpayer. I have found convincing proofs of this misery in all the printed documents; the peasants were in a most wretched state,—hence the Jacquerie of July and August, 1789, and the following years,—but authentic documents, as detailed, positive and complete as yours, would be most valuable. Much as I admire de Tocqueville,

¹ See last letter. M. de Boislisle had met Taine at the Archives Nationales, and remained on cordial terms with him until his death.

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I find him far too addicted to the abstract, and greatly prefer such details as you give—as the instance of the si-
poor peasants kept in a dry well because they could not pay
their dues, etc.

You well know my opinion about the Revolution. For
careful student it is an insurrection of mules and horse
against man, the mules and horses being led by monkey
with parrots' voices. The old régime, however, had its
ugly side, and it must be confessed that the poor, and
especially the peasants, had been treated like beasts of
burden. . . .

As you see by the heading of this letter we have become
country folk here in Savoy. I have my books, and work in
sight of the lake and the mountains. My labour goes on
slowly and not always successfully, for I am still very tired
yet I hope to finish my first volume this year.

Let me count upon the help of your erudition and your
kindness. In face of such documentary evidence as you
give all theories are vain. I do not wish to write one page
unsupported by proofs.

Believe me,

Very truly yours.

To Emile Boutmy.

Menthon-Saint-Bernard, July 31, 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Thank you for the news of yourself.
We shall be very glad to have you here, and your room is
waiting for you. Our position here is not as fine as yours,
but we like the place, and have the satisfaction of feelin

¹ M. Boutmy was at Caunterets.

at home, a feeling I have never had before. My mother and my father-in-law are with us. My wife and children are well, and you are welcome, both on your own account and for your kindness towards us all.

I do a great deal of swimming and a great deal of lounging. My head will not let me work much. Till now I have only done the chapter on the social life; it is a little longer than the one I read at the École last winter. I must do three more to finish the first volume.

The first chapter, on the trend of thought, is begun, but hardly more than that. It is difficult to start, but its object is to prove that Boileau, Descartes, Lemaistre de Sacy, Corneille, Racine, Fléchier, etc., were the direct ancestors of Saint-Just and Robespierre.

That which retarded their progress were the monarchical and ecclesiastical privileges which still remained unquestioned, but these privileges, once worn out by excess and collapsing under more scientific scrutiny (Newton's influence upon Voltaire), the theory of natural man in the abstract and of a social contract was naturally evolved.

Our own education when purely classical encourages this same theory; every clever young man, especially if he be poor and have his way to make, is more or less of a Montagnard or Girondin on leaving college.

It is quite possible that you and I are differing merely as to phraseology. To myself analysis and reasoning only seem destructive in their effects when brought to bear upon man in the abstract; applied to actual historical man, to a modern Englishman or Frenchman, they but prove the psychological forces, the customs, traditions, prejudices, interests, which when regarded as forces become as worthy

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of respect and careful consideration as is a watercourse or a weight, were it but for reasons of prudence and utility. . .

To John Durand.

Menthon-Saint-Bernard, September, 1874.

Now you are in Paris go and see Baudry's exhibition at the École des Beaux-Arts ; it is very good.

My friend Boutmy is back again ; go and see him, and tell him that I sent you. You will find all sorts of books and papers, both French and foreign, at 16, Rue Taranne the library of the École des Sciences Politiques, of which he is the director.

As to books, read the *Poésies Complètes* of Sully-Prudhomme ; a very instructive work is Maxime du Camp's *Paris : ses Organes et sa Vie*, in five volumes ; Flaubert's *Saint-Antoine* is worth reading, and the novels of Ivan Tourguenief are of the highest order.

To Marc Monnier.¹

Paris, April 15, 1875.

DEAR SIR,—You are most kind in your insistence, and I should like to submit to you an idea that has occurred to me.

My lectures upon the history of painting in Italy offer, no doubt, some points of interest to the young men of the École des Beaux-Arts, who are artists by profession and who meet me in a building full of casts and copies, not two steps from the Louvre and the Cabinet des Estampes. In

¹ M. Monnier, on behalf of the University of Geneva, had asked Taine to give a course of lectures.

Geneva, however, they might seem too technical, perhaps too crude. Besides this, my mind is so narrowly methodical that even for giving these lectures again in Paris I should need a month of preparation and revision. I can only write or speak of anything when the images connected with it have become habitual and involuntary guests within my mind. However, I see a way out of the difficulty.

Instead of my giving a course of lectures upon Italian art, let me offer you a course upon the Old Régime. This is the subject of the first volume of my work upon *Les Origines de la France Contemporaine*. I think that the first volume will be finished in October, and I have already revised about three-fifths, which would give the material for seven lectures. I count upon completing the rest at Menthon-Saint-Bernard, and there would be in all a dozen lectures. The audience would thus be offered the first introduction to my book.

The titles of the five chapters, each of a hundred to a hundred and twenty pages, which compose the volume, are as follows—

The Structure of Society.

Manners and Characteristics.

Intellectual Attitude and Leading Thought.

Propagation of Doctrines.

The People.

I am reading the third chapter at the École des Sciences Politiques this year, and my friends are good enough to tell me that it interests them.

Just consider as to whether the idea is at all feasible. In case it should be so, I shall be glad to know whether in

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Geneva one may be allowed to lack enthusiasm for Jean Jacques Rousseau. I admire him as an author, but I care neither for his doctrines nor his conduct.

In any case, I assure you that I shall make of Geneva my headquarters some day, and that I shall be very glad to see you there.

What a fine and melancholy letter you have published of Sainte-Beuve's:—"A graveyard lit but by the dead moon of Intellect."

To Marc Monnier.

Paris, April 30, 1875.

MY DEAR SIR,—Do not be misled by what has just appeared in the *Journal de Genève* as to my new book, and which I have also seen repeated in the *Moniteur* of April 29.

I am no believer in the despotism of Hobbes; in any case, I am far from attempting any work of dogma, contenting myself with simply discussing events and their causes.

My conclusion will be but *in petto*, and in favour of the constitutionalists of '89, Mounier, Lally-Tollendal, etc.

[The men of sense,—my favourites,—in 1789 were foreigners,—Dumont de Genève, Mallet-du-Pan, Gouverneur Morris, Jefferson. They prove their wisdom by predicting everything according to given conditions, even to ten years in advance.

The author of the article has only heard one chapter, and this he has misunderstood. I am by no means a mere reactionary. I am no upholder of the Divine Right of kings,—you will come across outspoken denunciations of the old régime when you read my book.

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My one crusade is against arbitrary and absolute power, whether exercised by mob or individual. A human being, or a number of human beings, arrived at despotism and under no counterbalancing influence of other powers, always becomes malevolent and deranged. The Convention and Napoleon are no better than Louis XIV.

All this is to set your mind at rest. I should be very grieved to expose you to the responsibility of a course of lectures which might hurt the feelings of your countrymen.

Yours very sincerely.

To Madame H. Taine.

Menthon, June 18, 1875.

. . . I have finished all that concerns the propaganda of philosophy among the higher classes, and have now turned my attention to the middle classes, so that only the question of the people will be left and I shall try to have got as far as this by your arrival. I am working rather faster than I did in Paris, and am working all day long.

Sorel's book is good, very instructive, and full of short quotations, objective in its treatment. It is not a brilliant work, but very solid and useful. A good sign, this; it were as well that the new generation should be so too, but the voting yesterday on the granting of academic titles by the State turned out badly. The little group of free workers will be swamped by the great Catholic crowd.

Do not forget to bring me the books by Cazalis¹ and Tourguenief. Read Cazalis' last; it is very fine and quite applies to modern matters.

¹ *Le Livre du Néant*, by Jean Lahor (Henry Cazalis).

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To John Durand.

Menthon, July 13, 1875.

MY DEAR DURAND,—I have written more than half of my last chapter, and hope to have finished by the middle of August. . . . I am very glad that you have undertaken to revise Mr. Van Laun's translation; he knows his own language and translates literary passages with much spirit, but he lacks training in logical reasoning and, especially in the preface, writes a good deal that is not clear.

You perceive that as regards public secondary education the Conservatives, the Clericals, and even Liberals like M. Laboulaye, are leading us astray. With us, as with you, there is no great belief in specialists.

Two or three days ago there appeared in the *Temps* a very good letter from Bréal, and another in the *Débats* from Renan, showing the right course to take—a very simple plan well supported by precedent, but they might as well have spared their pains. . . .

To Émile Boutmy.

Menthon, September 9, 1875.

We are very sorry to hear that you are not coming. We had been looking forward to your arrival as one of the pleasantest events of the summer, and had been expecting you from week to week all through August. I knew you had lately been at Monsieur Naville's, could you not have given us three days at any rate? We could have had a thorough talk together, such a talk as I have not had for over three months. Was it business for the École that recalled you? It is very certain that we shall find no

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Roman Catholic patron to endow its chairs with eighty thousand francs.¹

Write to me when you can, I am anxious for detailed news of you.

As regards myself, I am a prey to gloomy thoughts. The stronger footing democracy obtains, the more clericalism will there be among the higher classes, and even among the middle classes. With no place in the state or in the government, outnumbered by the votes of the masses, these classes will seek support in Catholicism and quite possibly take refuge in Bonapartism. . . .

In my opinion things are getting ripe for civil war, far more so than between 1815 and 1830, for the Liberalism of that time was much more moderate than the Radicalism of to-day.

If you were to hear your friends G—— and especially the municipal councillor of Paris, on this subject, you would be alarmed ; it recalls the vehemence and anti-religious hatred of the days of d'Holbach and Diderot. I feel assured that in fifty years' time we shall be below the level of Italy, and perhaps of Spain.

I have finished my *Ancien Régime* ; the first part is in the press, and my father-in-law is going to take the rest to Hachette in a week's time, when he is in Paris.

Yet what is the good of books ! Men are led by interests and passions ! One must do one's best, however, without thinking of results. . . .

¹ Taine was mistaken, as the magnificent donation which has provided for the future of the École came from a Roman Catholic friend.

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To *Émile Boutmy*.

Menthon, October 8, 1875.

I am most sorry to hear that your throat is troubling you. It will be very tiresome, with your lectures this winter. I have a strong suspicion that the good effects of water treatment are merely owing to the change of air and to the open air life. If you share this opinion, then come and see us here next year, and take your cure by lounging about the lake.

I do not start for Geneva until the twenty-fifth. My twelve lectures will take a month, being given three times a week, on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays at five o'clock. I shall be able to return home every week for three days.

Monnier is here and I have been consulting him. I shall, therefore, omit some strong passages against Rousseau, who still has a fanatical following in Geneva. I shall also cut down the passage upon the scientific acquisitions and the classical spirit of the eighteenth century, as being too abstract. All the rest will do. M. Templier has good hopes for it, although he considers that terrible third chapter, all philosophy and psychology, too tough for the general public.

Apparently the most popular part of the book will be the fifth chapter, that on the condition of the people, so that quite involuntarily I shall have been denouncing the *Ancien Régime*. An antidote to this will be found in the succeeding volume, on the Revolution; and this again will be balanced by the third volume, on the Empire. I find some comfort in telling myself that a historian belongs to his facts, wherever they may lead him.

I am waiting for my first proofs, which are going to Mr. Durand. The newspapers which reach me here make me as vexed as you are at the ministerial muddles.¹ Schérer and the *Temps* are getting most bitter over this question of ballot. In the present state of things we can always reckon on the worst side gaining the victory. However, when working with the tremendous unknown quantity of universal suffrage any sort of supposition is of little value, and this is just the fault of the system.

To Albert Collignon (Editor of "*La Vie Littéraire*")²

Menthon, October 18, 1875.

You do me much honour in asking of me an article upon Stendhal and Sainte-Beuve. They are our two masters of criticism, and I have often thought of writing on them. A careful and complete study of the two would mean a summary of modern psychology; in the one we have races, epochs—a general psychology; in the other, individuals—a biographical psychology. They are the founders of psychological criticism and of the natural history of man.

But the subject is a vast one, and my mind unfortunately will only work on narrow and methodical lines. I have to devote myself entirely to my subject, and am obliged to concentrate my thoughts upon it for months and even years.

I am just now engaged in seeing the first volume of my *Origines de la France Contemporaine* through the press, and

¹ The electoral law was then being discussed.

² This letter appeared in the *Temps* October 25, 1875, and in the *Vie Littéraire* October 28.

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am also planning the second. My brain will not be able to deal with any other subject for some time to come. I am loading it with all that directly or indirectly concerns the Revolution, and it would cost me much time and energy to plan out any other work.

I am returning to you the letter of Sainte-Beuve. It is exactly himself, exquisitely scrupulous for every shade of meaning. What he reproaches in us moderns is our ignorance of former surroundings, our poverty of tradition, our exaggerated esteem of the talent, or at least of the part played by our heroes. He considers, for instance, that I admire Stendhal, Balzac and Michelet overmuch, and blames me for only judging of them by their books. On the other hand, I maintain that he ranks Alfred de Vigny, Hugo, Chateaubriand and Lamartine far too high.

Within the last thirty years there have certainly been great changes in the general point of view. We think less of "phrases," of "beaux mots," and more of small circumstances and actualities. This explains the difference of opinion.

I ventured to make Sainte-Beuve the following reply: In every writer there are two personalities. The one addresses himself to his contemporaries, flattering their taste; he has, moreover, his own particular rôle in society, his personal display of wares, his personal circle and successes; the other speaks to generations yet unborn, advancing naked into the future with but his books within his hand;—this is the personality that I prefer, the essential, the durable.

Sainte-Beuve himself gains by this distinction. What a distance lies between the Sainte-Beuve of *Volupté*, of the

earlier *Portraits*, and the later Sainte-Beuve, the psychologist, the physiologist ! The first was but a conventional follower of the poets, a mere commentator, a humble acolyte of Madame Récamier ; the second is one of the two founders of psychological criticism, of the natural history of man !

I shall be in Paris on the first of December, and hope to have a talk with you about Stendhal. There is a great deal unpublished about him. Ask Sully-Prudhomme to get you, through Philippe Delaroche, a biography of Stendhal written by an Englishman ; you will find some very interesting letters there written by him when quite a young man to his sister Pauline.

Michael Lévy has also lent me a manuscript that Mérimée was to have published,¹ with two fragments of much suggestion, one of which is on the character of Napoleon.

To Madame H. Taine.

Geneva, October 26, 1875.

It all went off very well. The hall was filled. I had a very attentive audience of twelve hundred. I must see whether so many come to-day. It seems that I spoke distinctly and was easily heard. I was rather tired towards the end, but thanks to a good dinner at M. Monnier's I felt quite well by the evening. I read thirty-three pages, and at this rate I must suppress a hundred, which will mean a whole book, probably the third.

M. Carteret² was present, and complimented me very

¹ This was afterwards published by Calman-Lévy.

² Antoine Carteret, poet and *littérateur*, president of the Grand Council of Geneva, and an ardent promoter of the anti-Catholic struggle in Geneva.

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much. I hope not only out of politeness. At my next coming he wants to show me the Girls' College, which is his special pride, and which numbers nine hundred pupils. It seems that Girls' education is nowhere else so good.

To Madame H. Taine.

Yesterday I had the same audience as before and quite as sympathetic. I was kind enough to finish at the right time, and so had to cut short a good deal.

I dined at M. Vogt's, who has a very out-of-the-way house in the suburbs. We had to get to it after dark by muddy and interminable streets and almost without any light, while as only one person could steer clear of the mud at a time, we had to walk in single file. I asked him whether he had not been waylaid and murdered sometimes. Three ladies came and went with us, and managed not to get too much bespattered.¹

This evening I have to go to a meeting held by Father Hyacinthe who is preaching and officiating in a casino *ad hoc*. There are, it appears, not more than forty people in Geneva whose opinions coincide exactly with his own. To-morrow, Wednesday, I dine at M. Monnier's, where I shall meet him.

I have no time for more. On my table lie six volumes of the *Mercure de France*, from which I have to make extracts, and there are forty-two volumes altogether.

¹ Charles Vogt, 1817-1895, was a German naturalist. After the revolution of 1848 he was obliged to give up his professorship at the University of Giessen, his native town, and leave Germany on account of his advanced opinions. He taught at Geneva from 1852.

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To Madame H. Taine.

Geneva, November 16, 1875.

Monsieur Carteret was elected yesterday, to the great triumph of his party, which, however, suffered a partial defeat, as two of the non-radical councillors whom he wished to exclude, have got in also.

Monnier and I dined yesterday at Monsieur Gautier's, a man of good family, of great wealth, and a doctor by profession. It is generally held here that every young man, however wealthy, should be educated for some profession. There are only seven young fellows here who are doing nothing.

I found several society people at Gautier's, all with more of English tendencies than French. It seems that they live rather like our country aristocracy, very much to themselves, to the exclusion of new men, however wealthy and refined; they inter-marry, and the ties of family, even remote connection, being very strong, it is altogether a closed world to the outsider. It is the same with the three hundred families in Berne who are descendants of the old governors. They watch their power and influence passing to new classes and to Radicalism,—which means scepticism here,—standing isolated on their hills and looking down upon the rising flood from behind the barricade of their private life and boredom. They are, nevertheless, superior to our French aristocracy by reason of their culture and—
their Protestantism.

I should have much to note as to the civil law, the law courts, the taxation,—all indicative of a rising democracy, but it would need time and a longer sojourn here.

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I have to meet Dollfus ¹ and Giraud-Teulon ² at a café at two o'clock. They are far from approving everything in the Genevese and will give me some information.

I still find the same appreciative audience. It seems that Rochefort has been attending the lectures.³

At M. Carteret's this evening I shall meet the flower of the democracy, Liberal Protestant pastors, etc. By means of the old anti-papal leaven, he owes his majority to these pastors, who seem by no means good Christians, though extremely anti-Catholic. During the recent voting upon the ecclesiastical laws, from which the Roman Catholics absented themselves, there were 9,000 votes in favour of persecuting measures against 154 in favour of toleration. The spirit of Calvin still walks the earth.

*To Professor Joseph Hornung.*⁴

Menthon, November 19, 1875.

SIR,—I am over-late in thanking you for your present, but I was so busy in Geneva that I had no time for reading, and it was only yesterday, on my return home, that I could study the four pamphlets ⁵ you were good enough to send me.

¹ Charles Dollfus, born 1827, was one of the founders of *La Revue Germanique*, for which Taine wrote several articles in 1863.

² Giraud-Teulon was then giving lectures in Geneva.

³ Henri Rochefort had escaped from Noumea in the spring of 1874, and settling near Geneva was writing numerous articles for the Paris papers. Taine had made his acquaintance at Dr. Vernet's during the days of the Empire.

⁴ Joseph Hornung was a Professor of Law in the University of Geneva, and was the testamentary executor of Amiel.

⁵ The subjects of these pamphlets are as follows: Why were the Romans the Legislative People of the Ancient World? Ideas upon

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The broad views you take of European, and especially of Roman history, are most interesting. I recognize, as you do, that the success of Rome was due to the compacts and the tolerance between her patricians and her plebeians. In Greek cities and in mediaeval Italian towns a war of extermination was carried on between these two, but the Romans endeavoured to find means for mutual support in the struggle for existence. The reason perhaps for this may be found in the origin of the plebeian, composite and superior in character as he was to the ordinary commoner of other states. Rome, after conquering the neighbouring towns, probably transported the wealthy and noble families of these towns within her own walls, leaving the humbler sort under charge of a garrison, just as if in Venice the two or three thousand families of ancient lineage had brought into their state a hundred good families from every city or territory they had conquered—Chypryotes, Candians, Paduans, and folk from Zara and Dalmatia. Through this system there grew up in Rome a political though neutral lower class, and it is quite possible that to this fact is due the abstract and general character of the Roman state and Roman law.

Your sympathies are very Roman on this question, and while I agree with you as to the abuses and disadvantages of the conventual system, I hardly know whether to follow your conclusions in entirety. The French law of 1825 seems to me adequate. I only desire its more exact application. The fault of the Roman system under the

the Legislative Development of the Christian Nations—of France in particular; Roman History and Napoleon III; Convents and Common Law.

Empire and of the French system of to-day, consists in suppressing, or destroying in germ, all associations which lie without the State. This made of the Roman Empire, and will make of France, a mere barrack-room administration. You probably do not yet suffer from this evil, but it lies heavy upon us in France, and this is doubtless the reason of my being less hostile than yourself towards the abuses of the other system. My personal temperament by no means leads me towards mysticism, but I can sympathize with the gentle, melancholy, fervent spirits which desire to live in common, to submit to one superior law, to renounce their personal will and lead the cloistered life. Nature has room for all, whether Roman Catholics, Moravian Brothers, or Buddhist monks. In my opinion the state is but a guardian against robbers at home and enemies abroad, and when it has established justice and police, made roads and founded schools, it oversteps its authority when it prevents some few of its members from seeking happiness or peace of mind in the kind of life or community or dream that to them seems most desirable.

M. Giraud-Teulon, with whom I have often spoken of you, tells me that your kindness equals your learning and that I may venture to ask you for enlightenment. I am anxious to have some information upon the system of sliding taxation in vogue in Switzerland, not only that of Geneva, but that of Zurich, Berne and other places. As this system appears to me a notable consequence of democratic feeling, I should much like to know the rates with you, also the manner of assessment and whether the mere declaration of the taxpayer is accepted, and if not, how the valuation is made ; also whether there is any appeal

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and whether any cases of injustice or disadvantage are ever noted.

Thanking you, dear sir, in anticipation, and again expressing my gratitude for the pamphlets.

Believe me,

Very truly yours.

To Marc Monnier.

Paris, December 11, 1875.

MY DEAR SIR,—My publisher is to-day forwarding you a copy of my *Ancien Régime*. I beg you to accept it as a token of my gratitude for all your kindness, as well as that of Madame Monnier, both in Naples and Geneva.

Hachette is also sending my book to Messrs. Ader,¹ Carteret, Vogt and Hornung. I must ask you to thank these gentlemen again on my behalf for their kind reception of me. M. Hornung has been good enough to give me full information on the subject of the sliding system of taxation, about which I asked him, and this information is extremely valuable. Should this principle develop, our rich people will all emigrate; I mean to speak to Leroy-Beaulieu about it.

I have read Monsieur Carteret's *Deux Amis*; the book helps one to know its author, as it helps one to know his country. He must be a man who is assured of his convictions, and who has a great many convictions and beliefs. He must be both intellectual and religious—a combination which is lacking in our democrats here who are followers of d'Holbach, not of Rousseau.

Thank you very much once more. . . .

¹ Editor of the *Journal de Genève*.

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To Marc Monnier.

Paris, December 25, 1875.

MY DEAR SIR,—You exercise hospitality like a gentleman of the eighteenth century; you have overwhelmed me again and again with kindnesses.

Thank you for your kind article. You are doubtless right in your reserve on Rousseau, but my lack of appreciation for him is not on account of the practical effects of his doctrines, but is due to what I do not care for in his mental attitude and character. I do not like that type of unsuccessful claimant of divinity, creatures of monstrous vanity and essentially false judgment.

It would give me considerable pleasure to be able to box the ears of Saint-Preux, and even those of Julie. In my opinion Rousseau's birth was quite ill-timed: he ought to have been a sixteenth-century Genevan, or a seventeenth century Englishman; he would then have founded sects or conducted revival meetings; his misfortune was the disproportion of his nature to his surroundings.

Hachette tells me that we shall issue a second edition in January. I am now sketching out my second volume, which is to be on the Revolution.

A very good and complete biography of Heinrich Heine has just been sent to me. It is as amusing as a novel and as instructive as a work on history, and is both well constructed and well written. The author is W. Stigand, an English poet and critic whom I have known personally for the last ten years, and he knows France and Germany as well as he knows England. Would you believe that neither Germer-Baillière nor Hachette would undertake to publish

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the translation of this book, on the ground that no one reads nowadays in France, and that Heine is looked upon merely as a foreign meteor ! The translator is to be some one who knew Heine intimately during the last two years of his life, a German who has lived in England and in Italy—Camille Selden, in short, whose fine novel, *Daniel Vlady*, you doubtless know, and who is an excellent French writer. Is there in Geneva any publisher more confident and broader minded than our French ones ?

Very kind regards to Madame Monnier and to Madame Meyer.

Yours, etc.,

CHAPTER V

FIRST VOLUME OF *LA RÉVOLUTION*. ELECTION FOR THE ACADEMIE

Researches—The Political Crisis of May 16
—Publication of the First Volume of
La Révolution—Second Candidature of
M. Taine for the *Académie Française* and
his Defeat over the Vacancy left by
Thiers—Successful Election to the Chair
vacated by M. de Loménie, November
15, 1878—Correspondence

THE first volume of the *Origines de la France Contemporaine* entitled *L'Ancien Régime*, appeared in December, 1875, and losing no time in delay Taine then buried himself in the preparation of his work upon the Revolution. The whole of the winter of 1875 he spent upon research work at the Archives Nationales, Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Archives de la Préfecture de Police, etc.¹

By the spring of 1876 we find him settled down on his

¹ He, however, devoted some time during the summer to a short article on Georges Sand, which appeared in the *Journal des Débats* of July 2, 1876, and which was afterwards inserted in the *Derniers Essais de Critique et d'Histoire*.

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estate in Savoy, slowly working his way through the enormous mass of notes taken during the winter, while that conception of the Revolution gradually developed in his work, "en dehors de toute intention ou arrière-pensée politique," which finally replaced the official representation in which till then he, like others, had believed.

The work entailed a tremendous amount of labour, although pursued methodically in the calm surroundings of his country home, and it was sometimes interrupted by several weeks of utter exhaustion and fatigue.

During the winter 1876-77 Taine requested to be replaced as lecturer at the École des Beaux-Arts by M. Georges Berger, in order to be able to devote himself entirely to his literary work and so to economize his strength.

The crisis of May 16 troubled him profoundly. From the very first he had seen that this desperate attempt at reaction against the perils of the Left was doomed to meet with difficulties. Living as he did outside party interests and political campaigns, Taine was peculiarly able to judge of possibilities, and his clear intellect had already recognized the irresistible in the surging swelling tide of democracy. His personal inclinations were all against any government by the masses, his historical studies having tended to increase this repugnance; but the events of the famous Sixteenth of May appeared to him as bound to accentuate irremediably the misunderstanding between the cultured and non-cultured classes.

The melancholy outlook of French politics had its usual effect upon the health of the great historian, and he found himself forced to interrupt his work and confine himself to the preparation of a new edition of *l'Intelligence*.

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The sudden death of his brother-in-law, M. Chevrillon, in London, was another blow to his vitality.

Taine then decided to publish separately and in a single volume all that he had already written upon the Revolution, which meant the first three books. He had at first reckoned on not having more than three volumes for the whole of the work, one of these being devoted to the Revolution. By December, 1877, however, he foresaw that two would be necessary for the careful study of so important a subject, and the work growing under his hands finally caused a third to be engaged upon. The first volume appeared in the month of March, 1878.

The noisy acclamation from press and public that greeted its appearance is well-known. By some the author was dragged into the mud, by others elevated to the clouds. All this exuberance of expression did not greatly touch a man who looked at things from the standpoint of a historian and a sage; that this was so is proved sufficiently by the tone of his correspondence at the time.

The excitement caused by the book was hardly moderated when his friends at the Académie, where Alexandre Dumas was among his warmest supporters, urged him to offer himself for one of the vacancies left by Thiers, Claude Bernard and M. de Loménie. After much hesitation, Taine agreed to try for the seat vacated by Thiers, his opponent being Henri Martin. At the same time Renan became candidate for the seat of Claude Bernard.

Taine presented himself with but the equipment of his literary, historical and philosophical achievements, and forgot to reckon with the political passions unchained by his book. Once, however, arrived in Paris he was

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forced to realize that the election was to mean a bitter fight of a thoroughly personal and political character. June 13 saw the victory of Henri Martin by a majority of three votes.

Taine's supporters became more anxious than ever to secure his election to the vacancy left by Monsieur de Loménie, for which the voting was to begin in the following November. Taine was informed that his victory was assured, that he would have no canvassing to do, that he could go on quietly working in Savoy and be nominated during his absence from Paris. He was not one to consider life unlivable without the "*habit vert*," and thought he had already done enough in the way of travelling and canvassing. "I would gladly exchange all worldly honours for one more original idea of my own or for the power of proving the truth of the ideas which I have already conceived," was what he wrote to Alexandre Dumas.

This time, however, the aspirations of his friends were realized. Taine was elected November 14, 1878, by twenty voices among twenty-six, his only rival, Edouard Fournier, offering many apologies for his opposition which was only arranged in order to let him take his place in the lists. Fournier had two votes, there were also a *bulletin blanc*, and a *bulletin nul* which bore the name of Leconte de Lisle, who was not present at the election; later on it became known that this *bulletin nul* was that of Victor Hugo, who had crossed the sea during a storm in order to prevent Taine's election.

In course of time Taine derived much pleasure from his position in the Académie, and he became regular in his attendance at the weekly meetings, which he was fond of comparing to a select and pleasant club. The friendly

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feelings of which his election was a proof, and the joy of his family in his triumph, was no matter for indifference with him.

“My wish for success,” he wrote, “was principally inspired by the pleasure that I knew two persons would derive from it,—my mother, namely, and my father-in-law.”

Eighteen months later Taine was to lose these beloved friends in two successive crushing blows.

To Francisque Sarcey.

Paris, January 3, 1876.

MY DEAR SARCEY—I have just been talking to some one who has heard your lectures on my *Ancien Régime*.¹ Though late in the day I tender you my thanks. I was not sure at first as to whether I had anything to thank you for! On the publication in 1855 of my book on Cousin and the philosophers our friend Paradol turned his back upon me, considering that I had no right to criticize men who had fought in the cause of freedom and against the Empire.

I then learnt that the politician does not tolerate the impartial historian and the unbiassed critic. That I am, however, tolerated now by you gives me much satisfaction!

Tell About that I mean to write on the Revolution as I did on the Old Régime, in a purely scientific spirit and with no polemical intentions. The spirit of the second volume is already revealed by the first, and with regard to the third volume my mind will be as unbiassed as in its predecessors.

In the *Temps* of yesterday, à propos of a letter from a

¹ Sarcey had been giving weekly addresses on new books at the Salle des Capucines.

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subscriber, you were discussing my opinion as to the right costume of our classical pieces. The correspondent mistook my meaning. I merely said, just as you say, that the costumes and scenery for Persepolis or Pompeii were unsuitable for *Esther* or *Britannicus*. This was all. I do not ask for the return of seventeenth century costumes. . .

*To Gaston Paris.*¹

Boringe, Menthon-Saint-Bernard, May 17, 1876.

My best congratulations. Only thirty-six and you have gained l'Institut and the Collège de France! You have taken all the sacraments! The only thing you now need is marriage, and my hope that this will soon be accomplished is as much for the sake of "Madame Gaston Paris" as for your own.

I received your postcard too late for me to have been able to render my views to the Committee²; my views are also very limited. I was only sorry to see that the use of a dictionary in the translation tests is to be no longer vetoed. It seems to me that independence of such aid is necessary as a test of future work.

¹ Gaston Paris was a philologist and a member of the French Academy. Born at Avenay in 1839, he was one of Taine's most intimate friends. He died 1903.

² Taine and Gaston Paris were then members of an independent commission for the purpose of studying the question of the reorganization of higher education. The commission also included MM. Bréal, Boutmy, Berthelot, Hérold, Lionville, Monod, Renan, etc. A report of its conclusions was addressed to the Minister for Public Instruction, and argued in favour of the establishment of Universities in France.

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I also regret that the report is not introduced by a tabulated list of the chief propositions, as this would attract the notice of the Minister and enable him at once to grasp the drift of the matter. These points should be as follows :—

1. That the examination for Baccalauréat should be divided, the first part to be passed at the age of seventeen, the second after two terms of university life.

2. That all examination papers should be in two sections, one of these obligatory, the other optional.

3. That the four faculties should be incorporated into one university body, and that some non-members of the university should be included in the governing board.

4. That there should be three kinds of professors, those regularly installed, those *agrégés*, and those specially authorized. That each of these should be allowed to give private lectures.

5. That the half at least of fees for private lectures should belong to the professor holding the course.

These five points can be won separately ; each is a matter to be studied by the Minister independently of the rest.

This, however, does not mean that the plan as written out by the Commission should not also be submitted.

I am working very hard, with no knowledge as to whether I shall succeed. The question of dimension and proportion is so difficult.

Yours.

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*To Ernest Renan.*¹

Menthon, June 3, 1876.

MY DEAR RENAN,—It is like the music of the spheres ! Fortunate you to have so heard it, fortunate you to have found a true method of expressing it. There is much of the spirit of Plato in you, almost the spirit of a poet—in which, perhaps, can the truest philosophy be found.

I should like, however, to discuss one of the two things admitted by you as certitudes, namely (p. 22), that the world is progressing towards a definite goal, and is working out some mysterious design.

This assertion is most helpful for faith and morals, for consolation and for idealism, but I should place this belief rather among the probabilities than among the certitudes.

There is something, you say, that develops through an impulse from within, through unconscious instinct analogous to the movement of plants towards water or to light, to the blind effort of the embryo to leave the matrix, to the impulse that guides the metamorphoses of insects. Be it so ; but what if the mechanism that seems to be the effect of an abstract cause should be, as modern naturalists admit, the (effect)² of a working cause ? What if Darwin be right ? What if organic matter arrives at evolution through the mere fact of adaptation and selection ? What if the phenomena you quote only simulate the preconception of a definite design, just as flame seems to incorporate the desire to ascend, and water the reverse ?

“ . . . Un *nisus* universel pour réaliser un dessein, remplir un moule vivant, produire une unité harmonique,

¹ After the reception of *Dialogues et Fragments Philosophiques*.

² The word is missing in the original.

une conscience ? ”¹ I much fear that this may be but metaphorical language, a convenient solution like Newton’s attraction, and possibly you may take it thus yourself. You yourself offer the strongest argument against it by proving that this *nisus* is not universal, by stating that conditions are often more than hostile to it, by quoting the abortion of four millions of cod’s eggs for every one that is hatched, by stating that the great pachydermals of Siberia were killed off by the glacial period. In short, I should like to see you analyse coldly and in detail the theory of causation. Whether Darwin’s solution be true or not true matters little ; another similar procedure might have produced living organization ; but to take the question generally, there results from his hypothesis that the accumulated effects of a working cause (adaptation to environment, survival of the fittest) give to the observer an illusion as of an abstract cause.

In this—thanks to the naturalists—metaphysics has advanced during the last twenty years.

Many thanks for the word of encouragement in your preface.² I will do my best as long as I have power to think and write, but I cannot venture to apply your fine words to myself : “ Je sens en moi quelque chose de jeune et ardent ; je veux imaginer quelque chose de nouveau.”

¹ Page 24, *Dialogues et Fragments Philosophiques*.

² Page iii. “ Can we look for better days . . . ? Meanwhile our task is very simple,—the redoubling of our energies. I feel within myself a young and ardent strength, the desire of originating something new. Let Victor Hugo and Georges Sand prove to us that genius is not conquered by old age. Let Taine, About and Flaubert show that their best work till now has been but tentative. . . . ”

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You, dear friend, are young, your intellect is in full vigour. Your style has never been freer and more natural ; but as to myself, my early vigour has long deserted me ! Give us whatever new thing your keen eyes may discover, whether it be of science or of visions !

Let Berthelot give us his *De Natura Rerum*, his ideal science as he terms it, his conjectures on the physical world, as soon as he grows tired of his furnaces, but for heaven's sake get him to give up Kant,—an overdone philosopher none of whose theories remain standing nowadays, and who has been relegated by Spencer, Stuart Mill and positive psychology, to the rear of Hume, Condillac, even of Spinoza.

Should you be going to Ischia, do not forget to give us a few days as you pass. My wife wishes to remind Madame Renan of her promise.

Yours ever,

To Francis Charmes.

Menthon, August 28, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you for having found time to write another article on my *Ancien Régime*. I read *Les Débats* nearly every day, and see your pages so claimed by present politics that I had not ventured to hope for another article. This is what it is to be young and kind-hearted. Youth is over for myself, and for the last two months I have been suffering from a sort of mental indigestion caused by too much Revolution ; I have been obliged to stop writing and await the return of my old interest in the subject.

You write most kindly of my work, and have well noted my point of view as to the necessity of an aristocracy, and

the duties incumbent on one. An aristocracy no longer exists here in France; the nobles and the clergy no longer form one. In 1789, if the revolutionary party had so permitted, they contained its essential elements; since then, however, what with persecution and with lack of employment, they have become useless for the purpose, while the principles of 1789, the laws of the *Assemblée Constituante*, have destroyed the germs of any future aristocracy. The *Assemblée Constituante* was the most destructive, the Legislative and the Convention only applied and continued what it had decreed; its system, borrowed from that of Rousseau, made of France but a collection of individuals as separate and as similar as grains of sand; to keep them together and to drive them into masses the Consulate shut them up in different compartments under mechanical pressure. The effect of this is seen in the state of things to-day.

Remember me to Dottain,¹ the head of our firm. I should say that Molinari² is now our traveller. When he comes back I mean to ask him what he thinks of Claudio Jannet's *Les États Unis depuis la Guerre de Sécession*, published by Plon. Have you read it? An American who was with me last month considers it very true, except for the Romanist prejudices. Jannet is a disciple of Le Play. Many thanks once more, and kindest remembrances.

¹ Ernest Dottain, who died 1880, was once professor at the Lycée in Rennes. He was a literary man with keen interest in public matters, and took considerable part in the management of the *Débats* after 1864.

² G. de Molinari was a Belgian economist born at Liéges, 1819, and corresponding member of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

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To John Durand.

Menthon, October 8, 1876.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am glad to hear of your safe arrival, and to know that you are all well.

The tired feeling in my head is rather better, and I have been writing again during the last month; but I have been encountering unexpected difficulties, and have hardly reached the half of the second book. I had to state and discuss the work of the Assemblée Constituante, and this required research and reflection on all sorts of points—the nature of the State, its constitution, the aristocracy, landed interests, communities and guilds, the Roman Catholic Church, decentralization, and the civil and political laws.

I have succeeded, if I mistake not, in getting at the principles of all this, but I find myself so far from the accepted ideas of to-day, especially from those of modern France, that I need all my powers of concentration. One has to be lucid, and one has to prove things, and the work of elaboration is enormous. The work grows beyond my expectations. I much fear that I shall need two volumes on the Revolution, and this will mean another year at least. However, I have taken a substitute for my lectures at the École des Beaux-Arts¹ this winter, and if my health does not fail me, I shall continue my work without respite until it is completed.

Let me know in good time when you intend to publish a revised edition of your translation in New York, and I will arrange to send you my notes on the four books of *L'Ancien Régime* that I have not yet revised.

¹ M. Georges Berger.

Mr. Rae and his wife have been spending ten days in Switzerland on their return from America. They have been staying with me for the last two days, and leave to-morrow. Mr. Rae does not seem well.

We have been re-reading some pages of your translation, and I see that for an Englishman words have not always the same shade of meaning that they have for an American. For instance, in the sixth line of your preface he puts "none of these" instead of "neither." In the fourth he puts "amongst" instead of "between." In the last page of the preface, when I speak of the queen's dresses, he puts "marked out" instead of "pinned," and he substitutes "patterns of dresses" for "varieties of dresses." I tell him that in another hundred years' time there will be two English languages—one of New York, the other of London.

We are returning to Paris about the end of November. The weather is delightfully mild, a most lovely Indian summer. Our grapes are nearly ripe, and against all expectations we shall probably have a good vintage.

You will find some good letters in *Les Débats* from Molinari on the United States and Canada. Mr. Rae has just come from Canada, and is loud in his praises of it. He tells me that west of Ottawa there is a territory of twelve hundred miles in length and a hundred and twenty miles in breadth, where there is a vegetable soil of ten-foot depth, and where cattle can pass the winter in the open air.

Kindest regards from all.

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To Madame Francis Ponsot.

October, 1876.

DEAR MADAME PONSOT,—I am venturing to reply to what you write as to your uncertainty about your son's education.

I should say that at his age, and with the disposition you describe, he would profit little and would suffer greatly in a Lycée, especially as a boarder. The barrack-like life of our Lycées, the excessive amount of tasks and of mechanical written work, the method of teaching languages in an abstract manner fitted for mature intellects but not for those of children,—all this has considerable drawbacks, and it often takes all taste for intellectual labours from a child for ever. Our children mostly leave school tired of books and crammed with formulæ like parrots. The evils are not so great when the child is but a day scholar.

In my opinion it would be better, not only for his health, but for his mind, for the boy to stay at home with you until he has reached the age of eleven or twelve. In the meanwhile he should try to learn modern languages by speaking them constantly, or at any rate on Robertson's method; even Latin can be quickly learnt in this way. If you have any leisure time during the winter, and if you care to study the method yourself, you could begin to teach after a fortnight's preparation. You know German, I think, and so could begin with that. As to mathematics, the best plan is to start with practical work—surveying, practical geometry, etc., which can always be taught by the local schoolmaster.

Believe me,

Very sincerely and sympathetically yours,

H. TAINE.

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PS.—I should like to offer another suggestion for your son's education. There must probably be facilities in your neighbourhood for learning Spanish well, through refugees or traders having a connexion in Spain. A thorough acquaintance with a language, ability to speak and write it fluently and correctly, is a great thing nowadays, especially when the language so acquired is that of a backward country like Spain, of which the industry and commerce is chiefly in the hands of industrious men from other countries. You yourself can judge of this better than I can, and as regards literature and science, I assure you that Spain offers opportunities that could make the future of a Frenchman; Greek and Latin are far less profitable.

*To Émile Boutmy.*¹

Menthon, October 31, 1876.

MY DEAR BOUTMY,—I hope that the lease is now signed and that you have had no difficulties at the last moment.²

I am most pleased to hear that the coming term promises to open well. You do not tell me whether your stay at Lyons and your interviews with the great financiers have given you hopes of endowments or other assistance.

We shall be leaving here about November 9, as I am called to Paris on family business. We are all well.

¹ Émile Boutmy (1833–1906), was a member of l'Institut, and founder of the École Libre des Sciences Politiques. For forty years he was Taine's most intimate friend.

² This refers to the installation of the École des Sciences Politiques at No. 15, Rue des Saints-Pères.

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I finished yesterday all I could hope to complete before starting, the two parts of the *Constituante*; the first part on the destructive effects of this, is now revised; the second part, which is on the work of re-construction, I shall write during the coming winter, also, if I can, the book that is to follow it on the *Effets de la Constituante*; that is to say, organized anarchy, permanent and growing.

There will be two books to complete during the summer. The one entitled *Nouveaux Pouvoirs* will describe the small group of violent fanatics which in every borough and town as well as in Paris seized upon authority by force, and exercised it either against the law or by means of the law. The way in which the elections, and the administration generally, were managed during this period is rather interesting; you will see, for instance, how the *Législative* was brought into existence, and this was merely a club that replaced the *Convention*, a more violent club, which was dominated in its turn by the *Commune*, more violent still. Through the scheme invented by the *Constituante* there developed a systematic selection of madmen, all equally alarmed and alarming.

The last book is to be *Le Triomphe du Parti et de la Doctrine*; that is to say, the theories and practices of the Convention, both in Paris and in the provinces. I have all my necessary documents except for this, and therefore intend to visit the Archives this winter.

I am hoping to have done with the question of theoretical rights, and really think that I have seen my way clearly in this, and was right in dealing with it when describing the transition of the old régime to the new. After this transition France troubled herself but little about equity;

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the work of demolition went on as in the tenth century, while reconstruction was left to chance until force had to intervene.

I greatly value your criticism, and you would be doing me a great service if, about February, you would be so good as to read my first two books, when I shall have finished and copied them. Just now I am giving myself up to the impression of the events which I describe. I feel as if the men of the past were living and doing before my eyes, and I have to write as if I too were amongst them. I shall not print anything of this, however, until I have taken a calmer view of the whole, and with your kind assistance examined the general effect. I am just now convinced that two roads lay equally open, or nearly equally, for France to take, and that she chose the wrong one. In using the expression "equally open" I am speaking in the abstract; with the then existing circumstances, passions and ideas, with famine and oppression threatening the poor, with envy and jealousy sapping at the foundations of society, the reign of the Contrat Social, the laws of the Constituante, the final overthrow—all this was inevitable. My arguments, however, tend to prove that these ideas and passions were both unhealthy and false, and that but a very little more good-will and common-sense was needed for a better adjustment of affairs. We shall never have an aristocracy and clergy more well disposed than was the case at that time, and yet we are now stumbling in the mire of the bad road to which the foolishness and social jealousy of our ancestors has doomed us. With no hesitation whatever I summarize the rule of the Assemblée Constituante as the reign of

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improvidence, of fear, of empty phrases, and of general stupidity.

All this is, of course, subject to the influence of your criticism and of my revision. At all events, whatever my conviction may ultimately prove to be, I shall state it frankly. As I ask nothing from any one, I can indulge in the luxury of perfect sincerity.

Hoping to see you soon, dear old friend,

Yours ever.

*To Jules Soury.*¹

*Paris (no date).*²

MY DEAR SIR,—I have written a good piece of my own book to-day, and so I am going to read yours, or rather re-read it, but as a learner, not as a critic. I do not know a word of Sanscrit or of Hebrew, nor anything of the ancient East, so that I can but listen to the teaching of competent authorities. All that you say upon the early history of Israel, Egypt and Asia Minor interests me extremely, but pray do not expect me to judge between you and Renan as to the earliest form of the cult of Jehovah. I can merely learn and profit from you—nothing more ; but I can appreciate the probable truth of your views, and also the charm of your style. You have a fine expression on p. 87, and another on p. 293, with many others equally good. Upon Greece and modern history I am

¹ Jules Soury, the philosopher, was born in Paris, 1842.

² From the context this letter was probably written in December, 1876, on the receipt of Soury's *Études Historiques sur les Religions, les Arts, la Civilisation de l'Asie antérieure et de la Grèce*, which was published towards the close of 1876.

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better informed. At all events, I am going to enjoy your book, and I beg you to accept my thanks for it, also my homage to the vastness of your learning, which is so well illuminated by your leading thought. Here, however, comes in my one note of criticism—Is not the philosophy that you reveal, too much a personal, subjective poesie ? like that of Renan, a simple *placitum*, the outcome and effect of your general tastes and character and temperament ?

To render this more objective would it not be as well to balance your arguments by a conflicting point of view ? taking two pages or so on behalf of pessimism and the fortuitous concurrence of atoms, then pleading for optimism and the subjection of the material to the guiding dictates of the abstract. Both views have their value ; the writer has his choice between them, and would do well to choose them both.

Yours.

To Alexandre Denuelle.

Menthon, May 21, 1877.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I saw the sad news in the *Temps* just as your letter reached me.¹ Poor Libon ought to have retired two years ago, when he came to see us here. It is a warning to us all not to overtax our strength.

The more I think of the Marshal's last step, the more imprudent it appears to me. It is like the charge at Reichshoffen after the fight was lost, and only adds to the disaster of defeat.

¹ This refers to the death of M. Libon, a cousin of M. Denuelle.

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In my opinion the social and political battle we are fighting has already long been lost; universal suffrage alone would be enough to ruin France. The task still left was to alleviate the bitterness of defeat, to show the Republicans by contact with actualities the distance that lies between theories and practice. Gambetta as a member of the Treasury is no longer so anxious to disorganize our finances by any sudden coup. Camescasse as administrator is doubtless now acquainted with the difficulties of administration. Down to the municipal council of Paris there is no wild ranter who has not lost somewhat of his foolishness in the daily task of listening to reports on schools and roads and custom houses. As we are in the power of the brutes, we must learn to tame them, and above all to find them enough food. France as she now stands will be below the level of Italy, and about equal in prestige to Spain; it is all that we can hope for.

The Marshal's attempt will only exasperate them and hasten their day of power. Even with the dissolution, for which he will only get a majority of one in the Senate-house, I do not think he has any chance of success. The elections will give him just as Radical a Chamber, probably even more so. We are bound to face the fact that the upper classes, the rich and educated classes, are no longer influential in France, no longer lead opinion, quite the contrary indeed.

The shopkeeper, the workman, the farm labourer only need to find out on which side the upper classes mean to vote, in order to support the opposing candidate.

The new prefects will try to proclaim the social danger, but as there has been quiet in the last few years the elector

will not believe the warning; he is too ignorant and too shortsighted; he likes to believe in his own wisdom, and prefers the men who tell him that his democratic instincts are the right ones. Gambetta, on his side, will be obliged to raise his voice, to make more promises, to send out his red vanguard. He will return to power more tied and more difficult than ever, and the Marshal will have nothing left but resignation. In four months' time I foresee that Gambetta will be President of the Republic. Instead of a gradual descent into rank democracy, we shall probably rush into it with a crash.

To Émile Boutmy.

Menthon, May 22, 1877.

You offer to help me in getting through a difficulty; here is one for which I invoke your assistance and that of Monsieur Leroy-Beaulieu. I am trying to study the taxation arranged for by the Treasury during the Revolution, and want to know what was actually levied between 1789 and 1793, including the old dues, both direct and indirect, as well as the new ones dating from after 1791.

Do you know whether M. de Parien in his *Traité des Impôts* gives any information of the kind?

These are the documents that I have now in hand, or that I have had *in extenso* :—

1. A general account of revenues and fixed expenses (May 1, 1789).
2. A report addressed to the Assemblée Nationale by Necker (July 21, 1790).
3. Some financial reports addressed to the Assemblée Nationale by de Montesquiou (September 9, 1791).

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4. The report of Clavières (October 5, 1792).
5. The report of Clavières (February 1, 1793).
6. Cambon's report (February 1, 1793).

I do not mention those that follow.

Thanks to these documents, I can follow fairly accurately the annual, even the monthly state of the taxation, whether direct or indirect.

The third report, that of Montesquiou, is very detailed, and gives a full account according to the reports of Necker (May 1, 1789, to May 1, 1790), and of Dufresne (the last eight months of 1790 and the first six months of 1791).

It is, however, in this report that I find a complication, which, for want of supplementary documents, is difficult to understand. In this account (which is to be found towards the end of vol. ix in the re-impression of the *Moniteur*, but more fully in the Archives and at the Bibliothèque Nationale) one sees in the last line of p. 822 that the general receipts (twentieth capitation) which on May 1, 1789, were estimated at 155 millions a year, only realized 27 millions between May 1, 1789, and May 1, 1790, and realized absolutely nothing during the last eight months of 1790.

This last statement appears quite incredible, especially as in the reports of Dufresne for the first six months of 1791 there is evidence that the direct imports and land duties for 1789 and 1790 realized about forty millions in these months. Moreover, the Assemblée had expressly maintained these dues by various decrees. They cannot, therefore, have escaped levying for eight months, and yet I find no traces of them anywhere. Do you think that M. de Parien and M. Leroy-Beaulieu can enlighten me

upon this point? It is an important matter, for through the manuscript documents of the Archives I have gained proofs of the taxpayer's repugnance to pay his dues. I know that the imports bring in very little, an average of four millions a month instead of forty-four millions, and the official figure for the direct returns during the last eight months of 1790 would complete my work satisfactorily.

What do you say to our last political *coup de théâtre*? I understand that the flavour of Gambetta, though sweetened by J. Simon, was too sour for the Marshal, who has therefore rejected the dish. He will necessarily be forced to resign in four months' time.

Even with the help of the new prefects it will not be easy to cope with universal suffrage, which is a huge and unwieldy animal with short-sighted eyes and an indomitable dislike to bit and bridle. For the last six years this creature has been waxing strong and fat, and it is no longer the scared and feeble thing it seemed in 1870.

The result of the elections will consequently be bad for the Chamber. Gambetta will return with his pack barking more loudly than ever, and will be obliged to loose them from the leash.

Without considering possible dangers from abroad, I foresee a sombre ending to the year. Let me know whether you fear as I do.

My congratulations on the well-earned million!¹ Do not forget your promise to take a rest with us at Menthon as soon as you can manage it.

¹ A reference to the gift of the Duchess de Galliera to the École des Sciences Politiques.

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To Émile Boutmy.

Menthon, June 1, 1877.

Thank you so much for all your trouble. Do not worry further ; I have been talking to Levasseur, who did not seem any better informed ; and this, by the way, is a proof of the lack of serious study with which the history of the Revolution has hitherto been compiled.

I am arranging so as to leave a gap in my work of revision, which I shall fill in when in Paris next winter. Once more, forgive me for the trouble I have given you, and let me thank you most warmly for your help.

My impression as to this political crisis is the same as your own. Let me tell you something that deserves consideration. The grocer's wife at Annecy told my wife yesterday that all the commercial travellers with whom she deals declare that since May 16 their orders have been suspended and business at a standstill. Such being the case, what an argument against the new cabinet ! Political arguments fall unheeded by the small tradesman when politics have caused him a loss of fifty francs !

Unfortunately, I feel sure, as you do also, that the defeat of the Marshal will mean the triumph of the Radicals, and that six months hence Gambetta will be viewed as a reactionary. What the Legitimists, the Orleanists and Bonapartists are already disputing is, "*à qui dévorera ce règne d'un moment.*"

The Marshal evidently fancied that the weight of his name would turn the scale of the elections. What a mistake he has made ! Universal suffrage takes counsel only of itself, and except in times of violent feeling, such as the war of 1871, the incident of the forty-five centimes,

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and the battle of June, 1848, the democratic instinct of equality, the mistrust of the rich and well-born will always swerve to the opposite direction. This is why I so greatly regret the mistakes of 1789. Never were the nobles more liberal in their views and more worthy of respect; they have since become more narrow-minded, more difficult to deal with.

Read the two volumes of Macaulay's speeches. They are masterpieces. What good fortune to be born in a land where it is possible to be Liberal! These speeches are better than anything I have read since Pascal; the elevated thought, the political common-sense, and the wisdom they contain are admirable; they would be far better for our schoolboys to read than the sermons of Bossuet, Bourdaloue and Massillon. They inspire confidence in human understanding, and in the influence of reason on the masses, and you well know how greatly I need this confidence! The period I am now studying has quite the contrary effect on me, and makes me feel as if I were living among madmen.

Kind remembrances from all. Come as soon as you are free.

Yours.

To Gaston Paris.

Menthon, July 2, 1877.

Your news is very sad. I can do nothing but offer my sympathy, both to yourself and to our poor friends.¹ I have children of my own, and know how I should feel in

¹ M. and Mme. Delaroche-Vernet had just lost a little girl.

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such a case. For a long while I was prevented from marrying by the idea that life was too sad to be passed on to others, and I used to think that to provide oneself with a wife and children was to act like the tortoise when it exposes its head or feet to the knife instead of keeping them safely in its shell. My head and feet are now exposed, and may be taken from me any day.

The more a man cultivates his mind the more sensitive he becomes ; this is a fact that more than counterbalances all the benefits of civilization.

You are very kind to be interested in my big book. I have been working at high pressure, and yesterday I finished the third part—a tremendous piece of work entitled *La Constitution Appliquée*. I shall now frame the fourth part, *Les Nouveaux Pouvoirs*, which deals with the development of the Jacobin, the club, the management of elections and the appropriation by the more violent of all authority, as far as May 31, 1793. If I can finish this by December I shall be satisfied. I shall work at the fifth book all the winter long, but shall need a full year more before I can publish. All that I state I am doing my best to prove by documentary evidence, a most necessary precaution, for I feel convinced that since 1828 and the book by M. Thiers we have been weaving a web of beautiful illusions round this epoch. The dramatists, the poets, and all philosophy more or less humanitarian in tendency, have exaggerated the men of that day into heroes, whereas I have now discovered that Robespierre was a very petty creature.

Just now I am reading the first volume of Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*. You must really read

it too. The chapters on early man, especially the passages on the belief in ghosts and doubles, are most instructive and suggestive. Spencer casts an entirely new light upon mythology. Being no mythologist myself, and knowing nothing of Sanscrit, I am not in a position to judge as to whether he is right in his attack upon Max Müller and the celestial myths attributed to the maladies of language; but I should like Renan and Bréal to read his book, it is so full of originality, has so many careful evidences as to recorded facts, and its psychological point of view is so entirely novel.

It is in such wide generalizations alone, it must seem, that we can find the needful distraction; otherwise family troubles and political fears would end by driving us to suicide. And suicide is not worth while; the course of Nature and of evolution alone will hide us soon enough—us and our work too! If you would give us the pleasure of a visit, I would try to find more cheering words for you. Yet any sort of conversation, even on sad subjects, is a help, for argument is action.

Adieu, my dear Paris, take good care of yourself, and convey my sympathies to the poor Delaroche-Vernets.

Let us work all we can; work is our best help amid the troubles of this life.

To Émile Boutmy.

Menthon, July 8, 1877.

Try to shorten your stay at Lyons and at Monsieur Naville's; I am afraid you will not give us a long enough visit. . . .

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Has the Duchess de Galliera seen the institution she is helping to support?

I feel just as you do about the political situation. The stroke of May 16 can but prove to be a further complication of the slow disease, which in itself alone is quite able to destroy us.

France after 1789 seems to me like a vicious horse bestridden by bad riders. The accidents that have happened to them have been sometimes, as in 1789 and 1848, the fault of the horse; sometimes, as in 1830 and 1877, the fault of the rider. The upper classes will never learn to reckon properly with the feeling of the nation at large, and the nation rebels and kicks even when the government is quite acceptable to it. I feel that the Republicans are becoming more and more Radical in tendency, and the Conservatives more and more clerical, but that the Democrats will finally gain the day. Their triumphs in the way of levelling still subsist, even the most absurd, such as the universal suffrage of 1848 and the compulsory military service of 1872, with its ridiculous *Volontariat*, which seems to have been expressly invented for the purpose of interrupting all attempt at higher culture. The consequence will be that the upper classes will be done away with altogether as clerical, useless and over-pampered. Such a thing is endurable in the United States, where the sense of heredity is weak, where the millionaire makes his son a commercial clerk at the age of eighteen, and where the man who has made his fortune spends it all in pleasure, or devotes it to public institutions, but never thinks of founding a family. But France? No! Our strong family feeling is a decided obstacle for such democracy.

Speaking generally, for France as for Switzerland, I only see in modern democracy an employment for the upper classes ; excluded from actual share in the government, they can become a sort of lay clergy, advisers of an independent and superior sort. For a rich and well-born man I see no other opening but the culture of some abstract science, such as our friends the Leroy-Beaulieus have taken up. . . .

To Charles Ritter.

Menthon, July 19, 1877.

I much regret not to have seen you last winter. When you return to Paris you will always find me at home every Tuesday afternoon, and I shall be glad to discuss English literature or anything else with you. Your papers¹ did not arrive with your letter, but will probably reach me soon. . . .

Old age is coming upon me ! I can only hope for ten or twelve years more of lucid work, and that is very little time for the two or three ideas that I still desire to work out. I have given up literary criticism, and hand on my pen to younger men. Two, perhaps three, contemporary English writers are worthy to attempt it. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who has written but one masterpiece, but that of such high order that neither Tennyson nor any nineteenth century poet, with the exception of Byron, has anything to equal it ; Herbert Spencer, who is not a good writer, but who is the deepest thinker in Europe ;

¹ This letter is *à propos* of a translation of some Fragments by George Eliot.

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and then George Eliot, whose character studies are of the very highest merit. It seems to me that she is only surpassed by one among contemporary writers, and that is Tourguenief. He is still more "objective" than she is; he is, moreover, a consummate stylist; I can also call him a great poet; you can see this in his novel known as *Apparitions*, also in *Le Juif*. His latest book, *Terres Vierges*, is to me the perfection of art, a masterpiece of psychological study. George Eliot also goes far in this direction, and in the gradual and insensible development of character. But she moralizes over-much (see *Adam Bede*, *Daniel Deronda*, etc.); it is evident that she has had methodistical surroundings. On the other hand, she writes badly, obscurely, and shows disproportion in her use of words. Her education and reading have filled her brain with a jumble of technical terms, from political economy to metaphysics, and with these she overloads her books. She uses the sciences as spectacles for observing the world; and these spectacles are powerful, but colour all she sees. Then, too, her construction is sometimes at fault; she draws things out too much, and loses all sense of proportion as regards her episodes (see *Deronda*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Felix Holt*). She is a great genius, but an incomplete artist. . . .

To Émile Boutmy.

Menthon, August 10, 1877.

Come as soon as you can, and stay as long as possible. Perhaps you will be able to set me going again. Since July 1 my brain has run dry, and ideas will not come.

Whatever happens in politics will be for the worst. I much fear a *coup d'état* and a Bonapartist restoration. On the other hand, if the Republicans carry the elections, as I think they probably will, there will be friction between them and the Marshal, and if they get into power there will be no end to their mistakes. I have no hopes either way. . . .

To Gaston Paris.

Menthon, October 15, 1877.

. . . I spent a week in London with my sister Chevrillon,¹ who will be returning to Paris in about three weeks' time. . . . It was a difficult journey, and the visit was no less so. I have come back suffering from palpitation of the heart and an over-rapid pulse. In May and June I worked hard, and then grew tired and ought to have rested during July and August. This journey has pulled me down considerably, and I have had to be perfectly idle ever since. My machinery is growing old and out of gear.

Your congratulations upon my two finished volumes rather saddened me, for with this uncertainty of health I shall now need over another year for finishing the Revolution. However, I am growing resigned; my autumn began long ago, and I have long watched with the curiosity and sympathy of middle age the young men in the spring time of life that I meet on Sundays at your house—a rather green and sometimes rather dry spring, but very promising all the same.²

¹ M. Chevrillon had just died suddenly in London.

² The Sunday gatherings at the house of M. Gaston Paris were

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I quite think as you do about Boissier; he is a splendid fellow and a staunch friend. I have known him over fifteen years.¹

My mother is well, but has had a narrow escape from pneumonia—such a dangerous illness for old people. My wife and children, also my father-in-law, are all well. It is I who am the infirm old patriarch, unfit for any active effort. . . .

*To the Prince Imperial.*²

Menthon, October 16, 1877.

MONSEIGNEUR,—I should be most happy if my studies on the *Origines de la France Contemporaine* were more

renowned for the brilliant intellectuality of the members, both French and foreign. They were held weekly for thirty years, Taine being a constant visitor.

¹ Extract from a letter of Gaston Paris to Taine, dated October 11, 1877: "The journey has been delightful, everything was new and interesting and the people I met were most agreeable. In Boissier I found not only a man of mind—I knew him to be such—but a man of most kindly disposition. We started on our tour as mere acquaintances and have returned as intimate friends. . . ." Gaston Paris and Boissier had gone to Upsala to represent the Collège de France at the University Festival.

² Louis Eugène Napoleon, Prince Imperial, born March 16, 1856, killed by Zulus when serving under English colours in Africa, June 1, 1879. The Prince Imperial had written the following letter to Taine after reading his *Ancien Régime*:—

Camden Place, Chislehurst, October 8, 1877.

SIR,—All who are anxious for information on the subject of our country and who desire to understand the causes of the instability of our social structure must owe you deep gratitude for your work on the origin of modern France. The outcome of many years' laborious research and careful thought you have presented in most fascinating guise. I am anxious to thank you for this on my own

worthy of the approbation you have been so good as to express regarding it.

I have dealt with the matter as a mere historian. Never having taken an active share in political struggles, and recognizing that my education and tastes confine me to the life of a student, I have endeavoured according to my powers to help my countrymen by showing them what manner of men they had as forefathers. In my opinion they had need to know. The history of the Revolution is still buried in the Archives; I may venture to add that the story of the Consulate and of the Empire is hardly better known. The three or four great institutions born in the early years of this century have never yet been fully understood; by these I mean the University, the Institut, the Concordat, the Code Civil, the Administration,—they have had to wait for the slow course of events to explain their real meaning. The constitution of France is an anomaly in Europe. She failed in 1789 to achieve what neighbouring nations have accomplished, consequently France is suffering from a sort of spinal complaint, a matter of slow curing and of serious precautions. If I mistake not, a sufferer from this evil should know what ails him before he can hope for cure, the knowledge will thus prevent him from indulging in too violent movement. Since 1828, however, our historians, our poets and our novelists have endeavoured to persuade France that she is in a robust state of health, and that being more strongly

behalf. Your book not only helps me intellectually, but has given me a deeper satisfaction. Exiled from my country, my thoughts at least are free to wander there, and thanks to you I have been enabled to spend long hours in France. Believe me, etc., NAPOLEON.

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constituted than her neighbours, she can take the roughest forms of exercise. France has not yet quite rid herself of this delusion, but her sufferings are bringing her to reason. The serious study of history, politics and ethics has been in a backward state with us ever since the Revolution ; we can show nothing of the energy, the organization of the Germans in this matter. We begin, however, to atone for our deficiencies. I would venture to direct your attention to two foundations which in this realm of human thought will certainly acquire distinction for us. The one is the *École des Hautes Études* founded by M. Duruy just before 1870 ; the other is the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, founded in 1872 by private enterprise. The last-named institution will do for us what no individual, no historian, could ever do alone ; I foresee in it a centre from whence the actual politician, the man of action, will one day obtain a profound, methodical and progressive knowledge of the dominant European interests.

My book is but one among the documents that this institution will produce, a memoir to be consulted by coming statesmen. Such memoirs I have often come across in the Archives ; their object is attained when they are read by the few who can make use of them. That my book, too, may be of use to these is my ambition, and since you, Monseigneur, have had it in your hands, this ambition begins now to be realized.

Accept, Monseigneur, the assurance of my respectful homage.

To his Mother.

November 20, 1877.

. . . You see that politics are in an unsatisfactory condition. M. Germain's speech explains the high tension; there are two milliards that cannot be invested without risk. The tone of the Chamber grows more arbitrary; it might be a Convention. Apparently they wish to drive the Marshal to a *coup d'état*. I should like to be in Paris and able to follow things more closely.

To Ernest Havet.

Paris, March 24, 1878.

DEAR MASTER,—In sending you this book¹ I fear and know that you will be wounded by its tenor. Kindly, too kindly, though your letter is, I see but too well the effort that you make to hide your hurt. Pardon my hard speaking; you know that I have written according to my conscience, and that my inquiries have been as extensive and as minute as I could make them. Before I began to write it, I thought as most Frenchmen think; my opinions, however, were but more or less vague and general impressions. It was the study of documents, of facts in black and white, that made me an iconoclast.

The point of difference between us lies in our different conceptions of the principles that guided 1789. To me, they are those of the *Contrat Social*, and, consequently, false and of ill effect; this I have shown in my *Ancien Régime*.

There can be nothing finer than the formulæ: Liberty,

¹ The first volume of the *Révolution*.

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Equality, or, as Michelet expresses them in a single word, Justice. No reasonable man can fail to be impressed by them. Yet in themselves these words are so vague that they cannot be accepted without a clear knowledge of the exact value that is to be attached to them.

Now, as applied to social organization in 1789, these formulae signified a crass and superficial conception of the State. It is on this point that I lay stress, the more so as this crass conception still exists, and as the structure of France as it was built up from 1800 to 1810 under the Consulate and under the Empire has not radically altered. We shall probably suffer from it for yet another century ; this constitution has reduced France to the rank of a second-rate power in Europe ; it is responsible for our revolutions and our dictatorships. I could compare this evil to an attack of syphilitis badly doctored. The universal suffrage of 1848, an evil sore, was due to this, and in 1870-1 two fingers of the patient,—Alsace and Lorraine,—fell from him. If we do not take the right precautions we may fear the loss of other members.

In order that he may adopt the right régime the patient must know from what disease he suffers, and the knowledge will prevent him from desiring too violent exertion.

My book, if I have health and strength to finish it, will be a conference of physicians. Some time must necessarily elapse before the patient consents to accept the counsels of his doctors ; he will do imprudent things and there will be relapses ; those of his doctors who disagree with one another must also come to mutual understanding. I trust, however, that they will eventually succeed, and the reasons for my hopes I will now state. The French Revo-

lution can be considered as the first application of the moral sciences to concrete human interests. In 1789 these ideas had but just been formulated, their method was still unsatisfactory, based on *a priori* reasoning; their solutions were hasty, narrow, false. Combined with the unhappy conditions of public matters they produced the catastrophe of 1789 and the very imperfect re-organization of 1800. After long hindrance, these ideas have, however, now begun to attract interest once more. The method for their practical expression has been altered for the better; they will alter the conception of the State. Their influence, descending from the Académie des Sciences Morales and the Académie des Inscriptions, will gradually permeate the Universities and public thought in general, just as our notions of electricity and heat are handed down to us from the Académie des Sciences.

Public opinion will be influenced imperceptibly. We shall have a new conception of the French Revolution, of the Empire, of direct universal suffrage, of the rôle of aristocracy and of communities. Towards the end of another hundred years, this reformed opinion may possibly have influence upon our Government.

Such is my hope! I offer but one pebble to my co-workers, but many thousands of such pebbles carefully arranged can eventually become a road.

Forgive me once again for offering violence to principles, which to such a mind as yours can be almost a religion. Yet, though worshippers of different gods, the deep feeling that inspires our cults may be possibly the same. Let me briefly summarize our differences. The lawful queen of the future is not she who in 1789 was known to men as

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Reason, but rather she who now, in 1878, bears the name of Science—Knowledge.

Yours ever most sincerely.

To Alexandre Dumas.

Paris, April 24, 1878.

MY DEAR DUMAS,—You will remember our conversation of yesterday evening, and now I have been advised to offer myself as candidate for one of the three vacancies in the Academy. You also will understand my difficulty with regard to the seat of Monsieur Thiers. As I write upon the same subject as he did but with different convictions and different treatment, my election in his place might be construed as an attack upon his memory to which I should hesitate to be a party, his behaviour during the years 1870 to 1872 having claimed my recognition and respect.

He was, moreover, essentially a man of politics, while I have but uncertain opinions upon our history after 1815; my convictions are still undecided, and I make no attempt to discuss what I have not studied carefully.

This feeling inclines me, therefore, to prefer candidature for one of the other vacancies. I was anxious to know whether my friend Renan had any preference, and have just seen him on the matter. It is not the case, however, and he authorizes me to tell you so. He desires, as I do, to entrust this election to those who are the best judges as to how it should be managed. Should he be nominated as successor to M. Thiers, he would accept the nomination with pleasure. It was already proposed to him, just before the death of Claude Bernard, and he was quite pleased with the idea and even said that he would like to

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make the eulogium of M. Thiers, it being a complicated subject. I am quite sure that his election would give no offence to any one and also that it would please Madame Thiers, who, in fact, expressed as much before the death of Claude Bernard.

For three years Renan used to dine with M. Thiers once a fortnight, whereas I only met Thiers on one occasion. He is also the author of several political works and is altogether far more suitable than I am.

It would be most kind of you and your friends if you would understand my scruples and nominate Renan for the place of Thiers, and myself for another of the vacancies. Another argument in favour of my point of view is that the partisans of Henri Martin would offer me much opposition, but would object but little to Renan. A further advantage gained by this proceeding would be the avoidance of collision between Ollivier and Henri Martin, which otherwise would be the case. You know that de Sacy and Boissier are friends of mine; I cannot do better than to entrust myself to your advice and sympathy.

Yours very sincerely.

To Alexandre Dumas.

Paris, April 26, 1878.

MY DEAR DUMAS,—The Academy affair is getting very complicated. I met Renan by the Pont des Arts to-day, and he told me that he could not well oppose Henri Martin, as they were doing a good deal together. This puts an entirely new face to things and brings back the proposition made by M. d'Haussonville.

After much reflection I quite see that my personal feelings

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should have no weight in the matter ; my friends are better qualified than I am to judge of what is right and fitting, and you test the public pulse so much. I should have preferred to speak on Claude Bernard or on Monsieur de Loménie rather than on Thiers, but if you really consider that I should be acting properly in speaking his eulogium, and that the election would then be more easy, I am quite at your disposal. Should I be successful, I will do my best in this, and if I can escape touching upon his political career, I shall find pleasure in the subject.

To state my feelings briefly : I entrust myself entirely to you as to whether my candidature shall be pressed or not, also as to the vacancy competed for, and the time and manner of the nomination, only asking you to remember that in no case do I wish to oppose Renan, that I renounce all claim to any seat for which he proposes himself, and also that I only desire to present myself for nomination with some assurance of success.

Pray forgive my change of attitude, but you see that I have been influenced by circumstances. I can only say that should I be successful, I shall owe it all to you and one or two others, and that among these you emphatically, with your clear knowledge of men and matters, have the clearest outlook upon the situation.

Yours very sincerely.

To Alexandre Dumas.

May 17, 1878.

MY DEAR DUMAS,—You have acted the part of such a true friend towards me that I avail myself of your kind-

ness to ask whether you will act for me during my absence. Here is my letter of application for election to the Academy; please be so good as to forward it or not as you consider most advisable. If the outlook appears to promise success, just send me word. I will make a point of fulfilling the duties of a candidate and will come up from Savoy a few days before the election takes place, in order to pay the obligatory visits.

My position is quite simple. I consider it a great honour to belong to the Academy, but was not looking for this honour when the suggestion of candidature was made to me. I am informed that the majority of the members agree to help in my nomination. This offer causes me much pleasure and I accept it in the hope that the friends who make it have not been led astray by too great kindness of feeling for me, and that they are not expecting too much from me.

It is quite possible that between this and the election some political man may come forward to speak on M. Thiers; in such a case I beg you to act for me as you would for yourself. I venture to claim the feelings that you yourself would have in the matter as to withdrawal or not; your opinion shall be my own; I can only gain by the influence of your straightforwardness and discretion.

In this election, whatever be its issue, I am but a man of letters, a mere critical student of psychology and history. I have never taken any active part in either religion or politics; I have spent thirty years in writing twenty-five volumes in order to explain and apply a scientific method; this has been my only object in life, and I shall never have any other.

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If my last volume has shown up the faults of the Revolution, my previous book showed the errors of the old régime ; consequently I remonstrate when asked to enlist under any modern flag of strife, and in the present political struggle I prefer to remain an onlooker, not a combatant.

As regards M. Thiers, I remember, as every Frenchman must remember, his efforts in 1870 to prevent the war, and in 1871 to quiet the Commune. I entertain a deep feeling of gratitude and respect for his memory, and as critic and historian I can but admire his flexibility of mind, his general ability, his eloquence, his grasp of practical matters, his lucidity, activity, and courage. Few men, I think, have loved France as well as he did. It is certain that he stands among those who best have represented her since Voltaire's day ; it is certain, too, that he ranks among the five or six who have done most honour to our country in the nineteenth century.

As to the details of his political career, I have, however, no exact opinion. The history of the last forty years remains yet to be completed ; it hangs still too closely round us, no one can well criticize it who has not shared in its activity. This has not been my case, and I cannot venture to discuss what I do not fully understand.

If the honour fell to me to speak the praise of M. Thiers, I should endeavour to describe the man, the orator, the writer, and the patriot ; I should leave to a greater expert the task of following him as politician through the vicissitudes of parliamentary strife. In the narrow circle to which I should be bound by my incompetence, I should be sure to pronounce no word except of homage to the states-

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man, who after doing his best to save us from a painful war, gave back peace and order to our country.

To Alexandre Dumas.

Menthon, May 21, 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot attempt to thank you any more with any adequacy. I hope very much that you are not attempting anything more on my behalf, and am very sorry to have troubled you so much. Once again, let me tell you that I desire nothing better than to be guided entirely by you ; act in the matter exactly as you like.

Just now I am in the throes of starting work. I have to study the mental attitude of the Jacobin, and to discover the exact mechanism of ideas and sentiments that converted peaceful citizens and docile officials into terrorists, and, generally speaking, terrorists of most sincere convictions.

I possess a valuable book compiled in 1805, and therein is to be found the occupations in that year of the still surviving Conventionists. They were being employed as magistrates, inspectors of the customs, inspectors of the markets, etc, etc. While studying the Puritan of 1649 I could understand his loss of mental balance, accompanied by illusions and troubles of conscience. A dry, abstract, scholastic kind of madness—dry pedantry infatuated by verbal theology. The beasts of prey who used this jargon are not difficult to understand and classify. The Loubranys, however, the Rommes, the Goujons, even the Lebas and the Gregoires are most astonishing specimens of lucid

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delirium and reasoning mania. I am still far from comprehending them

As compensation for all this maze of human nature, my lake is of the loveliest blue, the field-grasses stand two feet high, and the birds are in full chorus round me. You are a true Parisian, I imagine, but I am a countryman at heart. At the end of a month's stay in Paris I begin to think that there are too many people in the streets and that the buildings give too straight a line to the horizon.

Yours very cordially,

H. TAINE.

PS. Boissier writes that Wallon has called on him and is opposing Renan for the second chair.

To Alexandre Dumas.

Menthon, May 24, 1878.

Another letter from me, my dear Dumas. I had never imagined that an election could cost so many steps and so much ink. My friend Boutmy writes that a person, whom he does not name, was sent to him yesterday by Mignet in order to induce me to renounce my claim. On the other hand Mignet and J. Simon promise to vote for me if I stand for another vacancy; if I do not they will be much annoyed.

I will copy the important passage for you:

“A careful reckoning makes it evident that in the absence of M. Duvergier de Hauranne, who is ill, there will be seventeen votes for either side. One of these is still uncertain, the Duc d'Aumale, but he is inclined to favour Henri Martin. We also hope to arrange so that one of M.

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Taine's supporters, who was nominated through the influence of Thiers, should plead illness. We also reckon that another voter who is due at a wedding about the time of the elections may possibly find it agreeable to prolong his absence. In this way M^{onsieur} Martin will have an easy victory."

The unknown intermediary quoted all this from Mignet's own words.

The man favoured by Thiers is evidently Marmier. Who is the one who will be away at a wedding? Do be good enough to find out if you can. What curious affairs these elections are! Since you have confidence in my success I too venture to hope for it, but the news you gave me yesterday as to Marmier's attitude, compensated as it seems to me only hypothetically by Barbier's abstention, seems to show that my chances are only five or six to ten instead of eight or nine as I had wished. However, you are on the spot and can judge better than I can. Do remember, though, that if one or two of my supporters seem inclined to desert me I would prefer to withdraw from the election. You yourself share this feeling. On the whole I am not one of those who consider life not worth living for want of "*l'habit vert*," and the older I grow the more I feel that I would willingly renounce all worldly honours for the sake of gaining one more thought or for the power to prove a theory.

Yours ever.

To Alexandre Dumas.

Menthon, May 28, 1878.

MY DEAR DUMAS,—I enclose you a document that has

just reached me from Paris. It is rather a curiosity and can be placed among the incidents of my electoral campaign.

Yours.

H. TAINE.

“The following is what is being sent by the Press Police to the country Republican papers as a protest against you:—

“Two books, neither of which is to be recommended, have appeared quite recently. One of these has received prompt handling from M. Edouard Sylvin in this very paper. His criticism was so thorough that it is hardly necessary for me to do more than mention the *Révolution* of Monsieur Taine. It would really be doing too much honour to *this pedant, this Prudhomme of paradox*, to devote two articles to him. The few literary men who, through a superficial and over-indulgent conception of him, had considered him a man of talent, are now remarkably disillusioned. And if I can trust the latest information, he has probably by this somewhat injured his chances of election to the literary senate of the Pont des Arts, which before had been practically assured to him. It is quite certain that the Republicans among the ‘Illustrious Company’ will not be able to vote for ‘*ce cuistre disert et malencontreux*,’ this gloomy pedant of pessimism.”

To Madame H. Taine.

June 5, 1878.

. . . I saw Dumas this morning, also de Broglie and d’Haussonville, and I left a card at Augier’s. I am now starting to see de Noailles and de Champagny.

Some of the papers denounce me as a renegade. Pelletan,

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at the bureau of the Senate, asserts that my defection is to be explained by my desire to enter the Academy.

I will write you a detailed account of things to-morrow. To-day I shall try to see Barbier and Marmier, my two pivots, one for, the other against me.

To Madame H. Taine.

June 7, 1878.

My Academical barometer is falling. Marmier has given me up and remains neutral. Mignet has gone to weep with him. Barbier, who we hoped would stand aside, has decided actively against me; he fancies that I desire the return of the Old Régime and that I am hostile to all religion. I sent him my book this morning with an indication of the pages by which these imputations can be contradicted, but he is a hard-headed person to deal with.

As to Marmier, he has the grace to look ashamed on meeting me and is trying to make excuses for himself. I have told him very clearly how I had counted on his promise, that I should otherwise not have stood for election, and that I should owe my defeat to him.

I am now working hard to counterbalance all this, and have already paid twenty duty calls.

Sandeau, de Sacy, Lemoine, have excused themselves, Sandeau with much unction and emotion. We must now operate upon Doucet and Sardou, who have promised me their second votes. I shall leave Dumas to attack Sardou, but will see Doucet myself.

Just at this moment,—half-past two o'clock,—the claims of the candidates are being discussed at the Academy. First d'Haussonville and then Dumas are going to speak on

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my behalf. The former has collected a series of articles by Henri Martin which were published in *Le Siècle* during the Empire and which are very hostile towards Thiers and very demagogic ; he will read extracts from them. Dumas will conclude by reading a letter which I wrote to him on Thiers.

To Alexandre Dumas.

June 8, 1878.

All my calls are paid except those on yourself and Boissier, from which you have dispensed me.

It will be seventeen to seventeen ; will my champions all appear ? And will they all give me their first votes ?

I shall be at Madame d'Haussonville's at four o'clock to-morrow ; perhaps I may meet you there.

I have no notes and extracts here, so cannot verify the passage on Albitte,¹ but I did not give it as my own. It is a note in the English original which I translated as the rest.²

Wherever I put a personal note at the foot of a page it is always accompanied by the words, "Translator's note." I am only responsible for these. The first page of the second edition of my translation contains the following remark : "Those wishing to consult the original will find it at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Rue Richelieu, under No. L.B. 41-25. It is catalogued in the third volume of the *Catalogue*

¹ Antoine Louis Albitte, senior, Deputy of la Seine-Inférieure in L'Assemblée Législative and La Convention.

² A reference to *Un Séjour en France de 1792 à 1795 ; Lettres d'un Témoin de la Révolution Française*, translated by Taine and published 1872.

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de l'Histoire de France, and was published by Longmans in London, 1797, two volumes in 8vo."

This quite disposes of all imputations as to fabrication on my part. My warmest thanks, whether I succeed or not! At present I put my chances at five to five.

Yours ever.

To Madame H. Taine.

June 8, 1878.

I finished off all my calls to-day, except on Monsieur de Laprade, who is not in Paris. Boissier and Dumas dispensed me as regards themselves. The fight is desperate, and has become quite political and personal in character. I should say that my chances are not more than 5 to 10. My friends embarked me rather casually upon this enterprise, and I was wrong in not exacting promises from more than eighteen voters, for there are still defections. At present we stand seventeen to seventeen.

Several people think that the election will not take place, or that it will be postponed for six months. I much fear that some one of my seventeen supporters may fail me on some pretext. Three who are away from Paris have promised to arrive in time, Laprade, Falloux, and the Duc d'Aumale; but it is quite possible that the Duc may not consider it advisable to risk offending any one and so may stay away!

The discussion at the Academy was so lively that it has been proposed to do away with such discussions in the future.¹ The articles on Thiers by Henri Martin were

¹ The "Discussions des Titres" introduced in 1870 by Legouvé, was practically abolished in 1880, at the instance of M. Caro. It was

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read in entirety by d'Haussonville ; but, as Dumas puts it, opinions are like tin-tacks, the more they are hammered at, the deeper they are driven in.

To Madame H. Taine.

June 9.

. . . I have travelled three hundred leagues ; I have devoted six days to calls. I am weary and discouraged. My one ambition now is to remain quietly in my own corner and leave all this parade to others.

The absolute lack of moral and literary conscience that I feel here almost strikes me as a physical annoyance, an evil savour of impurity. My chief impression is of absolute disgust. I am longing to be with my books again, my books that tell no lies.

To Madame H. Taine.

Paris, June 11, 1878.

. . . Yesterday, Monday, I spent two hours at the Salon. There was a fine portrait of Bonnat's, a good number of excellent landscapes, a Fortune in plaster—I do not know by whom, but very delicate and Florentine and with most admirable drapery ; a large unfinished picture of the death of Vitellius, by a very promising pupil of Romi's, and several ambitious and presumptuous failures and grotesques.

To-morrow morning I shall try to spend some hours at the Trocadero, and that will be all.

re-introduced in 1896 through Léon Say, supported by Legouvé. In December, 1905, the Academy decided to substitute the word *Exposition* for *Discussion*.

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I saw Renan yesterday. He is not satisfied with the Academical proceedings. He is nearly sure of success, but he does not like having Wallon as a rival. The two are being discussed to-day. Sacy, who pleads on behalf of Renan, will omit all his writings, will show the religious passages and read his article of 1856 on the Academy. Renan says, "I should have better chance of success if I had never written anything at all."

To Madame H. Taine.

Paris, June 13, 1878.

. . . . I am defeated. Fifteen votes for me at first, one for Wallon, eighteen for Martin. The Duc d'Aumale voted for Martin, probably influenced by the newspapers and in particular by an article in the *XIXième Siècle* which I will show you. It is thought that de Champagny gave his vote to Wallon, influenced by an old lady of seventy-four. Two, therefore, of the promises were not kept. I have declared my intention of standing for the chair of Loménie.

To Monsieur Caro.

Menthon, June 16, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter was handed to me just as I was leaving Paris. I must thank you both for the support you kindly tendered me and for the sympathy you offer on my defeat.

Renan came to look me up next day, like the faithful comrade that he is, and to try to induce me, on the representations of some friends, to stand for de Loménie's place. I have had a letter to-day from Legouvé to the same effect,

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and you have probably seen an article in *Le Temps* explaining how, that if I am very good and give up the bad company in which I have been found (this applies to you and Alexandre Dumas and de Broglie) the Left will forgive me and let me have the seat that the Right has not been able to obtain for me. Very tempting, as you see, but I confess that somehow I am not attracted. I have written to Bois-sier, an old friend of mine, like Renan. According to the papers everything one does has a political signification, one is claimed by either party whether one will or no. It is useless to assert neutrality, one is looked upon as a traitor to the Left if one accepts help from the Right, and as a traitor to the Right if supported by the Left. Personally I am always glad to meet courteous men of talent, whatever be their views, and am pleased to be obliged to them, for I have never found gratitude a burden. But when there is so much recrimination it is best to stay at home. You have seen my lake. I am there again with my Jacobins, and prefer them dead rather than alive.

To Jules Soury.

Menthon, June 25 (1878?).

DEAR SIR,—On reading your two articles I much wondered whether the official scissors had operated upon them. In a political paper it is impossible to touch the gods of that paper. You say that you have been on the *Temps* since 1870. I have been five-and-twenty years on the *Débats*, and you know the way in which Cuvillier-Fleury and Aron, with the editor's approval, have lately written on me.

Should Monsieur Jules Soury desire a professorship of

Ethnology at the Collège de France, he would first need to have a brother, Louis Soury, as leader of a political party, a democrat and socialist, who had taken an active share in the events of June, 1848, who had written an Apology for the Revolution in ten volumes, who is a great enthusiast for Robespierre and who suffered exile during the Empire, etc. Such are the actual necessary qualifications for any scientific post.

As to the subject of a book, I hardly venture to suggest anything; it should be suited to the temperament of the author, and the author nearly always hits upon his subject quite sub-consciously. However, as you are wishful to consult me, I will mention the subjects that have attracted me personally.

In the eighteenth century only one thing appeals to me, and that is a critical and philosophical biography of Voltaire. The writer would need to be well acquainted with physiology and historical science, and this is your case; with a study of Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences* you would soon be well acquainted with the position of astronomy and physics in the eighteenth century.

Three foreign subjects have always had a strong fascination for me, and if I were younger and in better health I should like to devote six or seven years to one of them.

The first of these is Venice from 1520 to 1576 with its art and its leading politicians and patricians. The fifty-six volumes of the *Diario* of Marin Samedo and the reports of the ambassadors to the Senate are now being published.

The next subject would be Spain between 1600 and 1690; the great moment of Spanish art and Spanish literature, the "picaresque" romances, the customs portrayed by

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Mme. d'Aulnoy and Mme. de Villars. It was one of those extraordinary and lofty phases that sometimes possess the human race, a phase strongly tinged with monomania and exaltation. From 1500 to 1700 Spain was perhaps the most interesting nation on this planet. I would advise you to read a translation by J. M. de Hérédia, of the autobiography of one of the conquerors of Mexico.

I have already suggested this period to Anatole France.

The third subject that attracts me is Alexandria about the year 200 A.D. What an atmosphere! St. Clement, Origen, the Gnostics of Syria and Asia Minor, the last phases of Greek philosophy and science, Ptolemy and Plotinus, the meeting of the Orient with Greece; magnificent intellectual and moral fermentation in a cosmopolitan town of 800,000 inhabitants; beneath all this the old Egyptian cult still in some vigour and gradually amalgamating with Christianity.

If I could have had the needful preparation for this subject it is what would most have attracted me. Flaubert used it for his *Saint-Antoine*. It is my conviction that the further removed from modernity one's subject is, the more agreeable it is to handle; moreover it gives one an *alibi*. That is what so strongly attached me to the old English literature.

You see that I am replying to you quite freely. Your abilities deserve a worthy occupation.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

To John Durand.

Menthon, September 6, 1878.

. . . If you are ever able to contradict and correct the

gossip that you sent me, please do so with my warm consent.¹ With the exception of two facts, it is all quite wrong. These two very simple facts are as follows :—

1. For six months I lived in the same furnished hotel as Monsieur About,—Hôtel Mazarine, Rue Mazarine. He lived on the ground floor, and I on the first story.

2. I was starting for the Pyrenees and buying a guide book at Hachette's when J. Simon and About, who were in M. Templier's office, saw me and accosted me, and, learning that I was going to take the waters, they got Templier to ask me to write a *Guide aux Eaux des Pyrénées*,

All the rest is invented. Neither of us was ever very poor. On leaving the Normal School I had a private income of 1,200 francs, then I gave lessons and earned 2,000 francs that first year without giving more than two hours daily of my time.

My principle has always been not to live by my pen, but to supply my needs by other work. We never had a common purse. I never borrowed a penny from About, and he never borrowed anything from me.

The doctor who sent me to take the waters of the Pyrenees was no student, but M. Guéneau de Mussy, chief doctor for the École Normale, who was good enough to continue to give me his services after I had left the school. I was not seriously ill, and only suffered from laryngitis.

I dined on one occasion with M. Hachette in the country, but that was five or six years after I had begun business transactions with him. My first book, entitled *Voyage aux Eaux des Pyrénées*, was purchased by Hachette for

¹ *Personal Sketches of some French Litterateurs*, Lippincott, Philadelphia.

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600, not 6,000 francs. I re-wrote the work entirely, under its present title, *Voyage aux Pyrénées* and arranged with Hachette for a royalty of 30 centimes a copy, which on an edition of 2,000 copies makes 600 francs. By a favour on the part of M. Templier this has been raised to 50 centimes a copy for the last year, thus giving it the same rate as my other books.

As to the story of the wine bottles, this is what I saw. One morning, while living at the Hôtel Mazarine, I found in About's room some thirty or forty bottles standing in a corner. He told me that they were a bargain and so he had got in a supply. Some days later, hearing a beggar singing in the courtyard of the hotel, he took him indoors and made him drink a glass of good wine to cheer him up. You see how the legend arises.

I do not know who is the author of the article, but as he claims to have conversed with me in About's house, and to have received confidences from About in the presence of the granddaughter of Hachette, his account might have weight with the American public, and it would be as well, therefore, to state that all this *table-talk* is cheap invention.

A pleasant journey to you, my dear John. My best wishes for you. My health is still unsatisfactory; I am still under medical commands to idle.

To Monsieur Caro.

Menthon, November 15, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—I was informed by telegram yesterday evening of the success to which you have so much con-

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tributed.¹ I owe you all the more gratitude inasmuch as until the last few months I was a stranger to you, and as in philosophy I could have been called your opponent.

You have offered me your hand in the kindest spirit, allow me to retain it, and believe me, etc.

To Ernest Havet.

Menthon, November 18, 1878.

DEAR MASTER,—I thank you for your proof of sympathy.² Notwithstanding our difference on one point I venture to hope that I still have your affection, in fact I feel convinced of it. Moreover, on this special point we are perhaps less divided than we think. I have no clearly defined views on present-day politics, it is what I am endeavouring to obtain, but I shall probably never succeed as I have not had the necessary training to justify my opinions. By this I mean a scientific opinion; I make small account of my impressions, which are those of the ordinary man-in-the-street. My aim is to collaborate in a system of research, which in another fifty years will give the thoughtful man a deeper insight into public matters than mere selfish or sentimental impressions. It is in this spirit that we have founded the *École des Sciences Politiques*. Such a method, which is a sort of social anatomy, must necessarily in some of its conclusions offend many generous and worthy men. The experienced, however, will allow a valued surgeon to probe even their dearest convictions in this way.

Believe me, dear Master,

Your ever devoted friend and servant.

¹ Taine was elected to the Académie Française, November 14, 1878.

² Congratulations on the Academy election.

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To Alexandre Dumas.

Menthon, November 19, 1878.

MY DEAR DUMAS,—It is a pleasant thing to be able to put on the green coat, but it is far more pleasant to have been helped by you as I have been. I am indebted to this candidacy for my more intimate acquaintance with you, and one of the advantages which I shall most appreciate in my new position will be the more frequent opportunity of conversing with you. The Avenue de Villiers and the Rue Barbet-de-Jouy were far too distant from each other ; thanks to the Institut we shall now be able to discuss things not political.

Yours ever.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST TWO VOLUMES OF *LA RÉVOLUTION*

Death of M. Denuelle in Italy—Reception at the *Académie Française*—Death of M. Taine's Mother—*La Conquête Jacobine*—Life in Savoy—Publication of the Third Volume of *La Révolution*—Correspondence

THE whole of 1879, in spite of interruptions caused by ill-health, was devoted by Taine to his *Conquête Jacobine*; we find no traces of anything published by him in this year.

By August 10 he had written two-thirds of the volume, but was then called suddenly away to Italy on account of the serious illness of M. Denuelle. He arrived in Florence just in time to close the eyes of his father-in-law, who had been to him "l'ami le meilleur, le cœur le plus chaud qu'il eût jamais rencontré." It had been the desire of M. Denuelle, as also of his son-in-law, to have a family tomb in Savoy, within sight of the home; this wish was accomplished, and a simple white monument with the brief inscription below its cross, *Famille Denuelle et Taine*, stands on the hill of the Roc de Chère,

above the blue lake, "bleu comme une pervenche," that Taine loved so intensely.

Towards the end of December M. Taine's mother, then in her eightieth year, fell ill. It was, therefore, amid anxiety and mourning that he pronounced his inaugural address at the Académie Française.¹ This took place January 15, 1880; M. J. B. Dumas, the renowned scientist, presided at the ceremony, and Taine was introduced by the two colleagues who had most warmly forwarded his nomination, the Comte d'Haussonville and Alexandre Dumas.

In the February of 1880 Taine published in *Les Débats*, under the title of *Préface d'une Anthologie Anglaise*, an essay intended to serve as introduction to the second volume of a work published by Mr. Wallace Wood entitled *The Hundred Greatest Men*.

In the month of August he was overwhelmed by the great sorrow of his mother's death. She died in Paris, having been obliged, through illness, to forego her accustomed summer visit to her son. The intimate correspondence of Taine at this time shows that he was crushed beneath this grief. Out of respect, however for his wishes, letters of a personal character have not been here inserted.

Very slowly Taine turned once more to his work. In April, 1881, he gave to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* his *Psychologie du Jacobin*. The second volume of *La Révolution*, the *Conquête Jacobine*, appeared in May. He did not remain in Paris till the publication of his book, being

¹ This is inserted in his *Derniers Essais de Critique et d'Histoire*.

anxious to return to Savoy and to begin the third volume of *La Révolution*.

Taine was becoming more and more attached to his calm and happy country life. The great house at Boringe was still deep in mourning, yet each summer saw it a welcome holiday home for the younger members of the family. Taine could there watch the growth of his children, of his nephew and his niece, in whom he took the keenest interest, supervising not only their studies but their play, and entering warmly into all their interests.

Each year also such close friends as Gaston Paris, Boutmy, Marc Monnier, John Durand, Georges de Boislisle, spent some time with him at Boringe. Other friends and colleagues, attracted by the neighbourhood, took houses for the summer near the lake. Among these were Renan, Berthelot, Georges Perrot, E. M. de Vogüé, Ferdinand Fabre, James Darmesteter, Caro, de Hérédia, and Schefer. Here it was that the author of the *Trophées* recited his still unpublished sonnets, while Taine himself, "modeste élève d'un maître illustre," wove verses berhyming his favourite cats.

The life of the little village also interested him and since 1878 he had been a member of the local Board. He knew how to make the peasants understand him, he could express his ideas to them and make them grasp their own. At the different meetings it was Taine who dictated the resolutions, which were always in exact accord with the feelings of the rural assembly. He resigned eventually in order to shield a petty functionary who had been guilty of a fault; this resignation caused much local consternation, and he was re-elected by unanimous consent the year before his death.

The working of his property also interested Taine, and

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at the time of the phylloxera ravages, his was one of the first vineyards to attempt the help of American plants, an example speedily followed by the small vine-growers of Savoy.

At this period Taine never spent more than four or five months of the year in Paris, and devoted these chiefly to research at the Archives and the public libraries. It was at the Archives des Affaires Étrangères, then directed by M. Hanotaux, that he became acquainted with the famous Pasteur, who often visited the Quai d'Orsay to see his son, a secretary at the Embassy.

In 1883 the *Programme Jacobin* appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for March 1. In March, 1884, he published an article on Mallet du Pan which served as preface for the correspondence published by André Michel. September, 1884, saw his *Psychologie des Chefs Jacobins* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and in the November of the same year the third volume of *La Révolution*, the *Gouvernement Révolutionnaire*, was published by Hachette.

To Gaston Paris.

Menthon, June 28, 1879.

. . . I do not know whether I told you of a conversation I had with Théophile Gautier on Victor Hugo. After having agreed with him as he desired, on Hugo's images, rhythm, technique, theatrical effects, etc., I began discussing the metaphysics, political and general views of his idol. At length, bowing his head and with a sort of low groan, as if overwhelmed by his conviction, he remarked, "Oui, c'est Jocrisse à Pathmos!" Exactly the same thing

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might be said of our past and present Jacobins. You know the phrase: "Nous sommes l'État"; they actually believe it; each is a sort of Monsieur Homais on the throne of Louis XIV or of Napoleon. . . .

. . . Take care of yourself, my friend, and rest. Do not become so spiritual as to forget that you have a body. Study and the world overtire our bodies sometimes; we need the good free air of heaven, we need to idle from time to time and to go back to the simple lives of the dumb creatures. . . .

*To the Comte de Martel.*¹

Menthon, August 6, 1878.

. . . You see that we have both been working on the same documents, and I shall be very glad to refer to your most conclusive texts and expositions, especially upon the ninth Thermidor. I agree with you as to Robespierre, and consider him a scared and embittered fool, hardly worthy of a third-rate post as country lawyer.

— Incapacity was the general characteristic of the Terrorists. As to their honesty, I do not know the circumstances you quote of the life of Panis.² I have read somewhere that Saint-Just stole silver, and I should be much obliged if you could help me to verify this allegation. Carra had once been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for theft. It is a pity that you have not been able to write anything about

¹ Le Comte A. de Martel, author of several works on the history of the Revolution.

² "Panis avait de tristes antécédents. En 1774 il avait été chassé pour vol du Trésor, dont son oncle avait été sous-caissier."

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the youth of Fouché. I would also direct your attention to that of Danton, which is so little known, as also his private and political career up to the tenth of August. On the whole they were all much of the same type as the leaders of the Commune in 1871. . . .

To the same.

Menthon, November 14, 1879.

. . . My researches upon Danton confirm your own, and the use of an assumed name seems to me quite probable. Nevertheless he was neither grasping nor miserly, but a man of keen vitality, consuming much, giving much, and not always able to distinguish between *meum* and *teum*. He rather resembles Mirabeau in this, but is Mirabeau's inferior. His superiority lay in his being no dupe of revolutionary catchwords ; like Mirabeau he made use of them, but was not deceived by them. . . .

. . . The story of the Empire is still unknown to history. I have been looking up in the Archives the correspondence of the préfets for some of these years, it is interesting reading. Thiers, as was natural, has omitted or falsely coloured the internal state of France at the time. . . . If you can show us Fouché during the Empire, it would be interesting ; I believe that he played some important and secret part under the Directoire. . . .

To Angelo de Gubernatis.

Paris, March 14, 1880.

. . . I am faithful in my attendance at the Académie

meetings, which is the duty of a new-comer, though an agreeable duty.

The Académie Française is a sort of club, composed of very differing but very courteous men, who maintain peace and harmony among themselves and allow the burning questions of the day to lose their heat before reaching the great hall where the dictionary has its home. Each member gives his best, and quite eighteenth-century urbanity prevails.

*To André Chevrillon.*¹

July, 1880.

No, my dear boy,—one cannot say that the period *produces* the writer, the word needs qualification and restraint. The writers that you mention were all born each with his own particular frame of mind. Pascal differs from Boileau, but they received a similar education, at least as to outline, different from that of Ronsard and Montaigne, different from what Voltaire and Montesquieu were to receive. If one wishes to define a writer one must do as the zoologists and botanists do,—indicate the group to which he belongs and the attributes he shares in common with it, as well as the specific differences and characteristics of his individual nature. This is what Sainte-Beuve has done so well. Pascal, for instance, belongs to the first half of the seventeenth century; his group is formed by Descartes, Corneille, La Rochefoucauld, Arnauld, even Balzac. Another group is formed by Boileau, Racine, Bossuet, La Fontaine, while yet another centres round La Bruyère. Between these three

¹ Nephew of Taine, and then in his seventeenth year.

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successive groups there are the variations of style. The three can now be included in a broader classification, that of the whole seventeenth century ; further, both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be grouped together as the sphere of classicism, from Malherbe to Fontanes. All this in the same way as zoology collects several varieties into a family and several families into a class.

On the great class which includes all French writers from Malherbe to Fontanes see the third book of *L'Ancien Régime*, chapter ii.

The *saccadé* and lyrical style of Pascal's *Pensées* is accounted for by the fact that they were unrevised notes. The rather pompous oratory of Buffon is not unique in the eighteenth century ; the *Éloges* of Thomas being sometimes a caricature of this. Buffon's style is the classical, his definition of it is the best we have (his discourse to the Académie) and it is to him that we owe the dangerous and characteristic counsel to employ general terms instead of the one word. On the other hand, his colouring, his taste for description and many other traits show that he is of later date than Bossuet and Fénelon.

To conclude, read the chapter in *L'Ancien Régime* on classicism, its causes and its characters, and to be able to define a writer, seek out the immediate group of which he is a member, and the special features by which he is individually distinguished.

My love to yourself and to your mother, and tell her that I beg her to take care of herself.

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*To Théophile Cart.*¹

Paris, March 13, 1881.

Accept my thanks and congratulations; you could not have chosen a happier subject nor handled it in better style.² Such an analytical study is the truest criticism. Goethe acted upon the precept once laid down by Milton, he made a poem of his life; I consider it his greatest achievement.

As regards his actual work as an author, I always feel his intellect and erudition far too much in evidence, the first part of *Faust*, *Iphigenia*, and some of his shorter poems excepted. Even in *Iphigenia* I still find this coldness, though its conception is so lofty and so pure that one can forget some artificiality. In *Hermann und Dorothea* particularly, the calculated effect and careful construction is over-prominent. Nothing can be absolutely beautiful that is not perfectly spontaneous, natural and personal; in Goethe's works one always comes across a theory.

His Roman Elegies, *Alexis und Dora*, have great charm and are rich in all the fascination of antique sensuality and Grecian polish. Yet his work reminds one of an orange-tree, laden with flowers or fruit but too evidently raised within a Weimar hot-house. . . .

To Paul Bourget.

Paris, May 9-10, 1881.

MY DEAR SIR,—From me also Sleep escapes after such conversation with a master of the craft.

¹ M. Cart had been a master at the École Alsacienne.

² *Goethe en Italie*, 1881.

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My interest in the subject has forced me from my bed, and I have stolen down again into my study in the silence of the night in order to resume our conversation. I will be brief, however,

To begin with, I have read your to-day's article, and see the difference.¹ The phrase that you point out has struck me, but not only that phrase, the context must be taken from "la voilà donc" to "Soie noire."² This gives a quite charming picture of the face (with the exception of the word *idéalisé*, to which I object). A passage that I prefer to this has the phrase "*une figure longue*," and there are these two fine lines, "*Et, répandue sur tout ce visage, une expression absorbée, une sorte de torpeur ardente inquiétait l'imagination en l'attendrissant.*"³

I consider this a masterly description, as it produces a vision of an uncommon and forceful personality. It is true Art, while the phrase that you prefer, "*ombre portée sur les yeux*" gives a less convincing effect than would be afforded by the brush of a painter. That you quote Prudhon is a proof of this.

My principle is that a writer must be a psychologist, not — a painter nor musician ; he must transmit ideas and senti—

¹ An article in the *Parlement*, reproduced in *Profils Perdus* (following *Cruelle Énigme*, edition Plon) with the title *Trois Souvenirs*.

² "*La voilà donc assise à côté de moi, sa figure à la Prud'hon idéalisée par l'ombre de son chapeau portée sur ses yeux, ses belles dents apparaissant sur le bord de son sourire, . . . et sur les bras demi-nus, des mitaines de grisette en soie noire.*" *Profils Perdus*, p. 290.

³ "*Elle avait plutôt le type des femmes d'Asie, une figure longue, des cheveux crépelés, des yeux brûlants ; et, répandue sur tout ce visage, une expression absorbée, une sorte de torpeur ardente inquiétait l'imagination en l'attendrissant.*" *Ibid.* p. 234.

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ments, but not sensations. Our standards of Art are not the same, but this does not prevent me from esteeming yours at its full value, which is high. Poor Flaubert had just your ideas. . . .

. . . You cannot think how greatly I desire to see you working on a book ; your articles are so full of talent ; such pearls must not be cast into the street, set yours upon a solid golden thread !

Cordially yours.

To Gaston Paris.

Menthon, May 17, 1881.

MY DEAR PARIS,—By starting before the publication of my volume¹ I have escaped many empty compliments, but deprived myself of some helpful criticism. You are frank and sincere ; tell me quite honestly what you think about it, how you hear it being criticised. Be as discreet as you like about the names of the critics, but you know that I am quite willing to accept contradiction as long as it is to the point. The opinion of such men as Monod, Sorel, Fustel de Coulanges, Lavissee, whatever it may be, I should be glad to hear.

As I am beginning my last volume, and have within the past fortnight been at work on its plan and general conception, a criticism on the book just published would be of double value to me.

I call your attention to three points on which I wish to have my mind at rest.

¹ Volume ii of *La Révolution, La Conquête Jacobine*.

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1. Is it new enough ? 2. Is it sufficiently well founded ?
3. Is it literary enough ?

To prove my sincerity, I will give you my own impressions. I can answer yes to the second question, it is a matter to which I have given much attention. As to the first I am in doubt, for I have spent so much time with the personages and the events, and have grown so familiar with them, that I am out of touch with accepted traditions and prevailing opinions.

To the third question I reply in the negative. I have subordinated it too much to the second and have kept too closely to my texts. I have not ventured on the necessary *coup de pinceau*, and possibly should not have had the talent for it. However, documents in hand, I have ascertained that some of the finest passages of Michelet (for instance, the one on Marat carried in triumph to the Convention after his acquittal in April, 1793) are efforts of imagination, a work of brilliant embroidery on a dull canvas. The man who wishes to keep within the limits of his text is obliged to dispense with literary style. . . .

* * * * *

Gaston Paris sent the following reply :

“ The only thing that I can criticise in this volume, *La Conquête Jacobine*, is the superabundance of facts, which are everywhere the same to some degree.

“ This is the general impression ! The collection of facts is ample, interesting and valuable. They are all to be found in the Archives, etc. ; was it necessary to be a Taine in order to collect them ? The researches should have been carried out by a worker of less talent, and Taine would then only have had to summarise and draw conclusions.

“ A more rapid *résumé* might have proved things equally well, and you might have given quite a brief indication, in the form of a note or an appendix, of the sources from which you have profited so well.

“ I think the book rather long, but this, in all sincerity, is the only objection that I can find against it.”

To Étienne Vacherot.

Menthon, Saint-Bernard, June 14, 1881.

MY DEAR MASTER,—I am glad that my *Conquête Jacobine* does not displease you. . . . You have noticed the systematic silence of the Republican press, both of advanced and of moderate views. My introduction of the grandsires to the grandsons has not been deemed an opportune proceeding; people prefer the illusion of tradition; they consider it an honourable thing to force France to bear the burden of the crimes of a despicable little group of fools and rascals. . . .

Old age and weariness have come upon me. I find it more hard to write now than I used to do, yet my study of the past has given me an insight into political truths which I am glad to have acquired.

The tendencies towards anarchy and despotism, tendencies fomented by Rousseau, developed by the Revolution, justified by our historians, these have been strongly evident in the history of our past ninety years. The individual has no respect for the Government, the Government has none for the individual. Such a state of things is fraught with gravest consequences; we are still far from being

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done with them, the future looms dark before our children.

Believe me, dear Master,

Yours most warmly and sincerely.

To Monsieur Petitjean.

Borings, June 26, 1881.

DEAR SIR AND DEAR MASTER,—Yes, it was I who forwarded you the volume.¹ The older one becomes the clearer grows one's past. I see myself back at Poissy, forty years ago, bringing you a very bad translation of an ode of Horace and hearing you read the poems of Lamartine. How many things have happened since those days! Your pupil has been rummaging in a quantity of papers at the Archives, and offers you a summary of it all, a rather heavy summary, laden with too many proofs, yet on such a contested matter and with conclusions so different from those of prevailing opinion, it was necessary to state them. I do not know when I shall be able to finish the volume that follows on the Revolutionary Government; my texts and plans are ready, but my health has weakened, I can no longer concentrate so well. I am tired of my Jacobins, and I regret the time when I wrote on literature, not history, and only had to deal with fine talents and fine thoughts.

Believe me, etc.

To Monsieur G. Monod.

Borings, July 6, 1881.

. . . The principle of 1789 can be reduced to the one dogma of the sovereignty of the people as conceived by the —

¹ *La Conquête Jacobine.*

— Convention. The men of that day constructed their notion of the State not only *à priori*, but with a point of departure and a method all their own (*Ancien Régime*, pp. 303–311). The result was a theory essentially anarchical (*ibid.* 311–319) essentially despotic and socialistic (*ibid.* 319–324) which developed on the one hand into a state of society such as is found among the Mamelukes of Egypt or the Turkish Guard of the later Caliphs, and on the other hand into something like the rule of the Jesuits in Paraguay.

This was the central motive force of events ; the morbid germ which entering the blood of a diseased society caused fever, delirium and revolutionary convulsions. If this be conceded, all judgment passed upon the men of 1789 and 1790, the Federation, the work of the Constituante, etc., must be revoked as merely due to the influence of imaginative pity. Yet their illusions and enthusiasms call for pity. They remind me of a starving blind beggar who puts his hand into a hole in a river-bank, and triumphantly produces what he thinks is a fish, but what is in reality a viper. This point of view does away with the apparent contradictions with which you reproach me. In 1789, also in 1790, many sensible and honest men, while feeling themselves stung, refused to believe their fish to be a viper. The case remains to-day.

In the laws of the Constituante I have tried to show the double effect, anarchical and despotic, of the dogma of the people's sovereignty. The volume you have read shows the dogma anarchical as applied by the Jacobins ; the book I mean to write on the Revolutionary Government will show the dogma despotic. Should I be able to write the fifth volume, on the *Régime Nouveau*, you will see in the

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constitution of 1808 the result of these two doctrines, no longer in the acute but in the chronic state.

Since 1808 the influence of these principles in her social and political structure has distinguished France from all other nations. To them is due the frequency of her revolutions and the disadvantages of the centralizing policy.

France has been demolished, and rebuilt on an entirely false principle; a narrow and superficial spirit, the spirit that we know as "*classique*." . . .

*To Georges Saint-René Taillandier.*¹

Boringe, July 20, 1881.

. . . You justify the Revolution by saying that it has been maintained by France and propagated by Europe. We must first agree as to the use of the word Revolution. If you mean by it the abolition of the Old Régime (absolute monarchy, feudalism, etc.) nothing is more correct; not only in France, but in Italy, in Spain, and the greater part of Germany, the old machine had rusted, and was but fit to throw away. This operation could, however, be effected in two ways; that followed by England and Germany according to the principles of Locke and Stein, and that of France which followed the theories of Rousseau.

Contemporary history shows us the superiority of the former method. France, following in the steps of Rousseau, has not only had to wade through the massacres of the Revolution and the butcheries of the Empire, but still suffers from the ill effects of his still influential doctrine.

¹ M. Taillandier afterwards married the niece of M. Taine.

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In the name of the sovereignty of the people we have undergone insurrections, revolutions, coups d'état, and shall probably see more of them. The same catchword has brought upon us over-centralization, interference of the State in private matters, with general officialdom and all its consequences.

—Centralization and universal suffrage, the two distinguishing traits of modern France, have impaired her constitution to the causing of both apoplexy and anaemia. I consider that of England, Germany, Belgium, Holland, even of Italy, far healthier ; and in this way actual history confirms my opinions, formed through psychological analysis of the doctrines of Rousseau, the Constituant and the Jacobins.

I am far from simply re-vindicating the "right of heredity" and from denying "the right of vocation." You will find in Darwin and in Prosper Lucas strong reasons for obliging us to give play to "vocation." Even in well-balanced races arise exceptional types, or as Darwin puts it, "individual varieties."

These are the men of whom Napoleon so well said : "La carrière est ouverte aux talents." The true political principle consists in utilizing every force, whether of heredity or of individuality.

To Georges Saint-René Taillandier.

Borlänge, August 6, 1881.

Upon the first point ¹ I am at one with you. The con-

¹ As to the permanence of French political traditions, administrative centralization, omnipotence of the State, etc., under the old régime as under the Revolution.

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ception of the State as formulated by the *Contrat Social* was certainly only adopted by the men of 1789 and 1793 because it conformed to many of their secret instincts.

Our modern life has its roots in the actions and the thoughts of past generations. We can trace its historical development to the reign of Philippe le Bel, the psychological roots strike back beyond Joinville among the earliest achievements of French literature. In my last volume I shall hope to prove this statement.

Upon the second point¹ I only differ from you in part. It is certain that no historian, no student of human nature, can flatter himself on having exhausted the infinite variety of ideas, feelings, passions, circumstances and conditions that constitute the life of any given nation at any given epoch. Yet in things psychological as in things physical there are values of different order; certain minds have a superior and decisive value in that they have the power of leading a large number of other minds, these I term *generators*; they are to be found in human as in natural history. My object is to study the workings of such forces in contemporary France, as I have done in the *Ancien Régime*, and as I am doing in the revolutionary period, by considering the dominating influences by which these forces were advanced or hindered. Such influences consist, after 1815, in the application of the physical sciences, in the falling into discredit of the classical in literature, in the new impetus given to moral science by the experimental method, and in the example and ascendancy of States reformed on other lines than those of the *Contrat Social*.

In history, as in every other science, I consider it neces-

¹ As to historical determinism.

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sary to disengage, define and measure the great active and enduring forces before proceeding to study what is more or less accidental and disturbing. This method alone enables one to determine the complete and final effect, and to foresee, to some extent, the leading characteristics of the future.

Doubtless there will be omissions and mistakes; fifty years hence, however, historians, schooled by experience, will arise to rectify our errors and supply what we omit.

This task will fall to you of a younger generation. I would assure you of our confidence in your ability.

History has hardly more than begun to be treated as a science; we are but laying the foundations; it rests with you young men to undertake the building.

Believe me, etc.

To Émile Boutmy.

Menthon, September 19, 1881.

You have all my sympathy, dear friend.¹

He was a friend of forty years' standing, and you were more than a brother to him. Remind yourself of all you did for him, of the everyday services by which you helped him, remember the perfect intimacy and understanding that had always existed between you.

I know by sad experience that such thoughts as these console one best, or rather that they distress one least. You will suffer much and long, it cannot be otherwise with you, but calm will come at last and resignation to the inevitable. And the dead are not unhappy, and we too shall

¹ M. Boutmy had just lost an elder brother.

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soon have joined them. Last year I realized so intensely that my own life is but a vapour, and it was this conviction, as well as the thought that I had done for my mother all that was in my power to do, which served as the opiate that, though it does not cure, at least brings respite from the pain.

I speak to you as if I were speaking to myself ; we have thought and philosophized so much together ! Your feelings are probably very much as mine. Let me say, though, what an old friend has the right to say, you must take care of yourself, you must relax ; your strength has been over-tried in this last cruel blow ; you must now tend body as well as mind. Come here at once if you can ; if not now, then as soon as possible. You will find no jarring note ; I am still suffering, still cannot work ; we shall all respect your grief, and it will be no effort to me to be as silent as you may desire. You know my wife's esteem for you. We are alone and expect no other visitor. As to the children and their games, theirs is mere kittens' play ; the difference of years makes them seem to us as of another world, so that their gaiety need not strike us sadly. You can stay in your room or walk about alone just as you desire. It is a great thing to feel surrounded by true friends ; I have loved you for thirty years, you are now the only friend of my youth to whom I can unbosom myself freely.

Once more, I beg of you to come ; my wife desires it too. You have still a fine career before you, a valuable institution to support, a book of great importance to revise ; you need health and strength for this. In sooth, life is no very pleasant thing,—Marcus Aurelius judged it very truly ; but it must be lived, and health and strength are wanted for the task. I count upon your coming.

To Edmond Demolins.

Menthon, September 19, 1881.

. . . A Frenchman dislikes continued attention and concentration. He likes to have an immediate insight into things even at the risk of inexactitude. He likes to soar high in the air, even to the void. He has not sufficient power of memory and imagination to see the details, the circumstances, the tremendous complexity of living realities. He revels in words;—further, he is vain, and does not care to confess to his ignorance and incompetence. . . . The false organization of our municipal government, the lack of independent institutions among us, deprive us of the elementary political education that a man receives in Switzerland, England and Belgium. . . . An Eton schoolboy, a wood-cutter in Illinois, knows more about real politics than do the majority of our Deputies. . . .

To Paul Bourget.

Menthon, November 24, 1881.

. . . It would take me some time to tell you all that your article on Beaudelaire suggests to me. I knew the man personally; I much appreciated his *Poèmes en Prose*, but have read little and liked little of his *Fleurs du Mal*.

. . . I consider that the *artists* that can be placed along with Beaudelaire are the Goncourts and Swinburne; at a greater distance, on account of their more healthy style, Flaubert, Heine, and Léopardi.

. . . I am convinced that there are rules as to style. . . . Personally I am fond of Edmond de Goncourt, but his style

has the effect upon me of artificial music, it sets my nerves on edge.

Beaudelaire, so exaggerated in his sentiments, is perfectly sane in the style of his *Poèmes en Prose*. In fifty years' time that of the de Goncourts will be hardly understood, even, as you assert, by experts. Read the verses of Cowley, Donne, Marini, Gongora; students will discover in them much ill-placed effort, much exaggeration, affectation, inexactitude, monotony. Epilepsy can never hold the place of health. I should like to send you a book of mine, *L'Idéal dans l'Art*, which I am now revising for a new edition. All my theories are there, so I will not repeat them now.

Doubtless from a certain standpoint, the scientific standpoint, all things are determined, and therefore equal, but it would be wrong to say that every condition is a normal condition. There is a Beautiful, a Good, an Ideal—degrees of the Ideal, and methods more or less reliable for expressing either the Ideal or the Actual.

Each human sentiment has its exact notation; speaking generally, this notation gains precision by simplicity.

Think of our friend Stendhal. He was right in saying that he wrote in the style of the Civil Code, and you know that the greater part of the *Chartreuse* was transcribed from his dictation or his manuscript without an erasure.

As to sentiments . . . the rareness of a thing does not constitute its superiority. Elephantiasis is rare, and Beaudelaire's over-sensibility is the beginning of the paralysis which caused his end. . . .

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To John Durand.

Menthon, November 25, 1881.

. . . I have just had your article in the *Penn Monthly*, and Mme. C. has sent us the number of the *Atlantic Monthly* which contains your essay on French Domestic Life. . . . Your explanation of our walls and enclosures is very interesting. I confess that I should not like to live in a country where every one would think himself justified in watching my private life; if a man of any fame is to be the prey of reporters the only resource will be to adopt a *pseudonym* and to remain *incognito*.

What you say as to the influence of Protestantism upon education is no less interesting; my general impression of all Protestant institutions is like your own, namely, that they strengthen a man's character but make it harder for him to find happiness.

André, to whom I read the first part of your article, says that you have omitted to mention our cats! Cats are leisured gentlemen with us, favoured guests, and occupy an important position in our domestic life.

Doubtless you have omitted this predilection as a weakness that might seem absurd to an American. . . .

To Max Müller.

Paris, February 20, 1882.

DEAR SIR,—You greatly please and honour me by sending me your translation of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*.

It is certain that in your hands and in the English tongue it cannot fail to be more clear, and must be recognized as a work of genius, yet I am less convinced and colder in my

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attitude towards it than yourself. I read it through in my youth, pen in hand, and the further I advance in years the more thickly do my objections crowd upon my mind. There is no need to send compliments to such a man as you, I venture to submit two leading reservations to your consideration.

Kant's object, as he himself announces, is the solution of the following question : How can synthetical judgments *à priori* be possible ?

In my opinion this is a psychological question, and can only be solved by observation, experiment, detailed and partly physiological analysis of striking cases, such as has been done by Stuart Mill and Bain, such as I have myself attempted. To attack the question as Kant does from the standpoint of pure reasoning, to treat it as a mathematical problem by the exclusion of particular solutions, is a wrong method and liable to cause deception.

The answer given by experimental and unbiassed psychology would be the following—

Among the synthetical judgments *à priori* two kinds must be considered ; some that are only such in appearance, being in reality disguised analytical judgments ; a careful and attentive examination shows that the attribute is comprehended in the subject. Others cannot be counted as such at all, being but generalizations or the anticipations of experience ; *à priori* they are denuded of all authority, the authority they possess being but conferred *à posteriori* by the experiences which confirm them.

Even supposing these objections to be valid, no whit of Kant's merit is denied him ; he has given a coherent and original solution to the greatest of all problems. His merit,

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to my mind, consists in being one of those thinkers who, with Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Condillac and contemporary English writers, have taught us that metaphysics presupposes as introduction, corrective and indispensable antidote, the existence of psychology.

I congratulate you on being engaged upon such studies and in your reconciling them with philology. Our younger men of learning seem to wish to leave philosophy to the men of our years, men of five decades, as an outgrown plaything unsuitable to the gravity and positivism of the modern generation.

Believe me, etc.

*To Bernard Mallet.*¹

Borings, September 9, 1882.

I have read with much pleasure the letter from Carlyle to your grandfather, "almost from the first he sees, if not across the phenomenon and through it, yet steadily into the centre of it."²

I should go even further. I think that Mallet du Pan

¹ Son of Sir Louis Mallet and great-grandson of Mallet du Pan.

² Thomas Carlyle to J. L. Mallet, October 31, 1851. This letter was first published by Bernard Mallet in the *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1885, and republished by him in his book, *Mallet du Pan and the French Revolution*. The letter contains the following passage: "Of all writers on the Royalist side, indeed I may say on any side, Mallet seems to me to have taken incomparably the truest view of the enormous phenomenon he was in the midst of; with a rare sagacity, almost from the first he sees, if not across it and through it (as I might say), yet steadily into the centre of it, and refuses to be bewildered as the others are by what is of the superficies merely."

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saw further than Carlyle, the reason being, it seems to me, that Mallet du Pan had in politics a surer judgment and better principles than Carlyle,—those of a practical and sensible Liberal,—while Carlyle, through his “hero-worship,” was inclined towards State despotism and influenced by Cromwell and the Puritan dictatorship. . . .

The possession of such an ancestor is a patent of nobility for you, and all that you publish about him will be as much to his glory as to the advantage of the public.. . .

To the Comte de Martel.

Menthon, November 16, 1882.

I am much obliged to you for the note on Danton that you were good enough to send me. Monsieur de Sybel has already called attention to his pacific and diplomatic disposition. As to his physical courage, I know nothing certain, but I see that he died well. I should say that his abandonment of the helm of State after September, 1793, was caused by sheer disgust. He would have had to be as stiff-necked and as narrow-minded as Robespierre to go on steering through the terrors of the guillotine. . . .—

Notes made after the completion of the third chapter of volume III of “La Révolution.”

April 22, 1883.

The more I study the things of the mind the more mathematical I find them. In them as in mathematics it is a question of quantities; they must be treated with precision. I have never had more satisfaction than in proving this in the realms of art, politics and history. —

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These are the principal conceptions that I find—

1. The conception of Generators. (The right angle in movement as the generator of the cylinder, the half-circle in turning that of the sphere.) Compare the dominating faculties, the effect of influential and predominating situations or circumstances.

2. The conception of Function. (The square or cube as function of the root.) The aptitudes of an individual, of a period, of a nation, of a race are functions one of the other. (My principle of connexions).

3. The conception of Function in general with particular exponent; or more generally, of function with more than one variation. (Power is a general function of the root, add to this an exponent and you have the square, the cube, such and such a power.) Compare the Ideal in Aesthetics. It is a power of the existent and surrounding Real, a power generally. Add to this the special exponent, the degree of idealization and you have the degree of transformation of the surrounding Real, very different in Téniers and in Rubens.

4. The conceptions of Maximum, of Minimum and Limit. All social, economic and political questions I have examined by defining them according to these terms, for instance, the actual or possible quantity of liberty, security, useful production, etc. Generally speaking, they are values of several factors of which one decreases as the other augments, so that the said quantity is a variable, rigorously determined and unique.

5. The conception of Imaginary Given Quantities ($\sqrt[n]{-a}$) Nearly all metaphysical conceptions (such as perfect intelligence, absolute power, etc.) enter under this heading; that is

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to say, assemblages of contradictories, disguised by the vagueness of notation. In particular the notion of infinite mind-attributes is contradictory.

6. The conception of Means (between a certain number of quantities). This becomes a measure by which the others are related according as they stand above or below, or are less or greater. Nearly all the adjectives by which we qualify a person or a thing are of this kind, as good, bad, courageous, cowardly, etc. Also a number of important substantives ; for instance, value indicating the measure of attraction measured by the means of sacrifice in a given group of buyers and sellers.

7. All these conceptions are dependent on the notion of Quantity. Consequently the essential conception in the moral sciences is that of quantity, and the essential object is to define and measure the given quantities ; that is to say to distinguish their kind, then to relate this kind to a selected unity. The whole art of thinking and writing consists in this.

8. Add to this, notably in social and political affairs, the mechanical concepts of measurable force, of antagonistic force, equilibrium, leverage and weight.

To Paul Bourget.

Boringe, July 30, 1883. 

You are a friend and admirer of M. Coppée, and you promised last winter to point out for me the passages that you prefer of his. As he is standing for election to the Academy, will you tell me these passages ? I have his

books here and have some leisure, so I can read them conscientiously and critically.

Personally, M. Coppée appeals to me ; his originality, his talent and his worth are incontestable. But you know that old people like myself have some difficulty in getting accustomed to new metres, new vocabulary, new sentiments and subjects,—in short, to what you term the modern school. . . .

I have just been re-reading, as I do each year, the *Chartreuse*, *Lucien Leuwen*, *Rouge et Noir*, the *Chroniques*. *La Chartreuse* still overwhelms me and enchants me after forty or fifty readings. . . .

*To Francis Poictevin.*¹

Menthon, October 4, 1883.

SIR,—I have not read the *Païenne* by Mme. Adam, but it was courageous of you to publish her letter as a preface. I shall, therefore, venture to reply to you ; an honest writer, such as yourself, desires no empty compliments.

On the main issue I am partly of your opinion. The semi-deranged, the semi-idiot, form an interesting and instructive object of study. In natural history the inferior animals are being recognized as most important ; you know the researches of Darwin on polyps and earthworms. Para-

¹ This letter appeared in *L'Événement* of October 7, 1883, preceded by the following lines : “The young author of *Ludine* so harshly dealt with by Mme. Adam, has received an interesting letter from M. Taine which we are glad to have the pleasure of publishing. A letter from M. Taine is always a piece of good fortune, but this one is particularly interesting.”

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sites, vermin, microbes of every kind have an important part to play in the social as in the material world, and the student of human nature has, like the naturalist, strong reasons for describing them.

I consider that these reasons are decisive at this time, at any rate in France. Before the close of the century Homais and Joseph Prudhomme will probably be uncontested and absolute monarchs of our country. Our friend Goncourt has therefore done wisely in showing us Jupillon and his successor, the sign-painter. It remains to be seen whether these personages, so important in Science, may rank the same in Art. I do not think they can. You tell me that you have read my *Philosophie de l'Art*; permit me to ask you to re-read *L'Idéal dans l'Art* (upon the degree of value of created characters).

In my opinion Art and Science are two different orders. When by the process of a novel you create a personality, it is merely an invention, never the actual living being, the true scientific evidence. As such your creation is but of doubtful and secondary value.

Give me in its place an intimate and dated journal, authenticated letters, etc., and add your comment to each characteristic citation. The best example of this sort of thing is offered by Carlyle in his *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*. He dates and arranges with scrupulous exactitude every available document belonging to his subject, then in different type he adds his own reflections. His style in this is very picturesque, very careful in its study of human nature, and has much in common with your own and that of the de Goncourts.

If, instead of a famous Puritan, you wish to describe an

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ordinary individual, or even a deranged mind, in this way, you can easily find your model. Leuret has published several in his *Fragments Psychologiques*. I shall then follow your commentary with keen interest, for it will bear upon words and actions that have had actual existence. The ugliness or platitude of the subject will matter little, one forgets the horrors of the dissecting-room in the satisfaction of an insight into positive reality. I, too, am content to suffer evil savours in a novel, and welcome an insight into the mind of its writer.

As to form, I appreciate your experiments in style. Although I myself am of another school I enter into yours and endeavour to forget my prejudices, fully comprehending your complete and coherent system. It is a new music to me, an octave higher than that to which I have been accustomed. It has different intervals, adapted to a special order of sensibility. It abounds in strong and sharp impressions, conjures up sudden dimly defined visions, provokes a tension of the soul and mind and nerves, and reminds me strongly of the music of Hungary and Gypsydom.

One cannot, of course, venture to contest a system of music; all depends on its adaptibility to the ears that listen to it. A writer has to fish his little black characters one by one out of his inkpot and by means of these puppets endeavour to convey his ideas and emotions to his reader. It is, therefore, necessary for him to know what sort of reader he shall have. The modern reader appears to be fairly cultured and intelligent; we meet him daily in our paths, he is an engineer, a lawyer, a student, a professor, an architect, a painter, a man of means; busy with his pleasure and his work he can only spare us a small amount of time

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and attention. It is our object, therefore, to let him understand us easily and thoroughly.

We must make allowance for his trend of mind, not over-tax his power of imagination ; we must remember that the normal reader has not the artist's vision, the poet's inspiration ; let us not exact of him special powers acquired by special training. . . .

To Professor Oscar Browning.

Menthon, November 15, 1883.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have not read Lord Gower's correspondence in the manuscript, but as far as I can judge by the title I should consider their publication of much value.¹ I have been told by competent authorities that these despatches are most important ; they cover the whole period from the recall of the Duke of Dorset to the tenth of August, 1792. The opinions and impressions of competent men of that time are very rare and consequently all the more valuable.

The despatches of Gouverneur Morris to George Washington and those of the Baron de Staël to his court have already given us much information ; those of Lord Gower will assuredly help us further and bring light to bear upon the chaos of gossip in which present-day readers have perforce to flounder.

I would willingly exchange five hundred volumes of journals and pamphlets for the weekly letters written by an

¹ The *Despatches of Earl Gower*, published 1885.

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ambassador or statesman in office to his sovereign or his leader.

Yours, etc.

To Georges Patinot.

Menthon, August 11, 1884.

. . . Marc Monnier's book is delightful, quite a masterpiece ; you ought to have had several of its chapters already discussed in *Les Débats*, but I am now so far removed from literature that I cannot undertake the article you ask of me.¹

You have quite restored the *Débats* to its old position ; I should say that in the field of politics it is without peer in France. I look forward with much interest to the articles on officialism that you tell me are to appear ; we shall be able to study the differences between us and the Germans on this point.

As you are kind enough to appreciate my interest in the *Débats*, I should like to tell you that I consider our rising men in literature to be Alphonse Daudet, Maupassant and Bourget.

Bourget you have secured ; *Madame Bressuire* is till now the best and most simply written of his novels.

Before your time I had often spoken of Albert Sorel ; it is too late for him now, as he is on the *Temps*. There remains Emile Boutmy, Director of the *École des Sciences*

¹ M. Patinot, on behalf of the *Journal des Débats*, had asked Taine for an article on Marc Monnier's *La Renaissance, de Dante à Luther*. Paris, 1884.

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Politiques. He is now revising a work on England and the English constitution ; he is a writer as well as a savant and a thinker, his work as original as it is acute and delicate ; I wish the *Débats* could have portions of his book in advance.

You have James Darmesteter already, and I shall always regret that you were not able to engage André Michel.

The number of talented and promising men is very limited, and I know that you are anxious to secure them.

We others, however, who are crippled or over-wearied—allow us our retirement !

Believe me, etc.

To Paul Bourget.

Menthon, September 12, 1884.

. . . I see with pleasure that your impressions are like my own.¹ . . . On the strength of several statistics I had estimated the number of families spending £1,000 and more annually at 120,000 ; could you, through the help of your friends or of your books, make an estimate of the number at this present time ? A revolution and any great shock would be much more terrible and far-reaching in its effects in England than in France, since, if I mistake not, nearly every one in England expends the whole of his income or his earnings, while in France, at least in the country, thrift is still practised, the principle being to save

¹ Bourget was publishing his *Notes sur l'Angleterre* in the *Débats*.

a quarter or a third of one's income, a prudent measure which enabled us to pass through 1848 and 1870. The same principle exists in Italy and Belgium.

I am no competent judge, but Mr. Gladstone's measure seems to me a venture attended by some risk.¹ Our own mistakes have taught us little, and others will not be warned by them.

As far as I am able to conjecture, acknowledged rulers will become mere executors, employees of the masses, consequently such things as knowledge, experience, deep calculation, foresight, which belong to the minority, will have less and less share in State government,—sovereigns, parliaments, and ministers will all be obeying the commands of the parish clerks, the Homais, the Prudhommes, the illustrious Gaudissarts and John Hiroux. The increase of knowledge, trade and comfort needs some counterbalancing; this will be found in the ascendancy of fools. . . .

To Émile Templier.

Menthon, November 8, 1884.

I am much obliged for your comments and profit by them in an alteration that will allow of no false interpretation on the part of the reader.

After the sentence "Ils ont été proclamés à cette date," I add "they had at first been formulated by J. J. Rousseau: the rights of man, the sovereignty of the people, the social

¹ The Extension of the Franchise, 1884.

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contract. All these are well known. Once adopted their practical effects developed naturally. . . .”¹

Thanks to this addition no one will be able to find any disagreement between this preface and the preceding volumes, for this connecting of the principles of Rousseau and the actions of the French Revolution is indicated in twenty places, particularly in *L'Ancien Régime*, book iii, chapter iv; in the *Révolution*, vol. i, book ii; vol. ii, book i; and vol. iii, book ii, chapters ii and iii.

The novelty and interest of the work consist, as it appears to me, in the connection that I establish between theories and events.

. . . I am rather surprised that I should be accused of “dealing lightly” with an austere subject. When the bounds of indignation have been reached there remains nothing but cold irony, and such, I thought, was the tone of my preface. I have probably been over-Anglicized through my dealings with Swift, Sydney Smith and Thackeray, and this is a mistake in addressing Frenchmen. The English and Americans to whom I showed the passage consider it the saddest and bitterest in the whole volume.

My object was to give the reader a single abbreviated phrase as the final summing of the book, a phrase which should be so exact and so suggestive as to recall to him all that the volume has to say. . . .

To F. de Roberto.

Paris, November 25, 1884.

. . . The masters of humour are certainly Swift, Cervantes,

¹ The preface to the *Gouvernement Révolutionnaire*.

and Heinrich Heine. In France, as you rightly say, we have Rabelais and Montaigne ; you admit Molière and Voltaire as belonging to the second rank ; let me further suggest Montesquieu and Paul Louis Courier ; I consider them humorists of the finest order. . . .

CHAPTER VII

LE RÉGIME MODERNE

M. Taine's Health seriously undermined—His Visits to Vichy and Champel for the sake of the Mineral Waters — Publication of *Napoleon Bonaparte* in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and definite Rupture with the Princess Matilde—Taine's Life in Paris—The Salon of the Rue Cassette — Publication of Articles on Church and Schools—His last Illness and Death.

ABOUT this time the illness, arising from over-tension of the nerves, that was to prove fatal to the great historian, was carefully diagnosed, and from 1885 he was obliged to subject himself to strict treatment and visits to different spas, which greatly changed the course of the home life he so dearly loved. He struggled courageously, using all possible means against the incurable disease that finally conquered his vigorous constitution, but for forty years he had been requiring more of his brain than any human brain can give. Taine grew to realize that his days were numbered ; he

hoped, however, to live to complete his work on *Les Origines de la France Contemporaine*, though he felt that time would not be granted to him for the study on the will that he had dreamed of ever since he had begun his favourite work on Human Intelligence.

His interest, however, in psychology continued unabated, as is proved by his letters to Binet, Fouillée, and de Candolle; and he still devoted time to the encouragement of the young writers of talent that were growing up around him. The only published works that can be traced to this time of his life were two articles in the *Journal des Débats*, one entitled *L'Étude de la Littérature Anglaise*, which appeared in the issue of January 19, 1887,¹ the other on *Marcelin*, appearing May 3, 1888, besides a study on Edouard Bertin, intended for the centenary issue of the *Journal des Débats*.

By the close of 1886 Taine had completed the great study of Napoleon Bonaparte which forms the introduction to the *Régime Moderne*.

This study, which is carried out entirely in an unbiassed spirit, had led the historian to pronounce the severe criticism upon the great emperor which is so well known. Taine well realized that his severity, however justified, could not fail to wound those who still clung to the traditions of the Empire—that it would especially affect those bound to the Napoleonic dynasty by ties of blood. It was the feelings of the Princess Matilde, who for so many years had been his attached friend, that Taine in the first place felt bound to consider. Before the publication of his article in the *Revue*

¹ An English translation of this article had appeared a few days previously in the *Youths' Companion*, published in Boston.

des Deux Mondes Taine sought out the princess to ask if she had any objection to its appearance. "My opinion as to the Emperor," he said to her, "is that he was the greatest genius of the modern world, and that his egoism was equal to his genius. Judge, therefore, and decide. Rather than wound you in any way, I will refrain from letting these articles appear in such publicity, and will let them be published later on in volume form alone."

The Princess Matilde, generous and frank as she was, replied to this straightforward appeal by telling Taine to let his articles appear, and as he took his leave, she hastened after him to say: "I am so touched by your consideration for me, that whatever your articles contain, I shall not see what might otherwise be painful to me."

Unfortunately, however, the Princess had not realized how hard it would be for a member of her family to accept the Napoleon of M. Taine. On the appearance of the first article, which was the less severe, she wrote to him in a manner that sufficiently betokened her irritation. When the second was published she went to the writer's house to leave her card, on which she had inscribed the letters P.P.C. The breach between them was now definite. Taine's regard for the princess was such that this caused him deep distress.

A few months later Prince Napoleon published a book entitled *Napoléon et ses Détracteurs*.

The *Napoléon Bonaparte* was followed in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of January and February, 1888, by two articles, the *Formation de la France Contemporaine*, and the *Passage de la République à l'Empire*. In March and April, 1889, appeared three articles on the *Réconstruction de la*

France en 1800. In April and May, 1890, these were followed by two articles on *Le Défaut et les Effets du Système*. These seven articles form the first volume of the *Régime Moderne*, which was published by Hachette in the month of November, 1890.

Taine's great masterpiece proceeded very slowly. Each successive year found it more difficult for him to work during the summer, and he was forced to take the waters at Champel-sur-Arve, so beneficial in their influence.

He spent less time in Savoy than heretofore. His children were growing up and their education kept him longer in Paris. Here, since the spring of 1884, he had been living in the Rue Cassette, occupying a large and quiet flat, what had been the Hôtel Mole. All who knew the historian agreed in pronouncing the old mansion a fitting framework for his personality, and the little narrow street was as quiet as a country road.

Almost opposite his house was the Hôtel d'Hinnisdal in which the Institut Catholique was domiciled. Mgr. d'Hulst, the director of the Institute, proved of great assistance to Taine in his articles on the Church.

Though far from being a man of society, and though for some time his health forced him to give up going out in the evening, Taine was always glad to welcome his friends in his own home, and his Monday evening gatherings held during two or three months every winter were most attractive to his friends. The literary world was naturally most represented there, Berthelot, Renan, E. Rousse, d'Haussonville, de Vogüé, Maspero, J. Bertrand, Boissier, Bourget, Lavis, Thureau-Dangin, Leroy-Beaulieu, Vandal, Sorel, being frequent in attendance. A certain number of political

men were also to be met with, such as the Comte A. de Mun, Ribot, Cavaignac, E. Aynard, Cochin, Léon Say ; besides several diplomats and foreign ambassadors, and artists like Léon Bonnat and Paul Dubois.¹ General Gallifet was a frequent visitor, and nearly all the distinguished Englishmen of the day called at the Rue Cassette during their stay in Paris, from Matthew Arnold, Lecky, John Morley, Lord Aberdare, the Duke of Bedford, and Lord Reay, to Mrs. Humphrey Ward and Mary Robinson. Both Academy colleague and timid *débutant* found the same kind welcome, which was not easy to forget.

Occasionally Taine cut short the Paris season in the spring and spent some days at Fontainebleau or Barbizon. Here amongst the stately trees, he whom Sarcey had often called "the woodman" seemed to find the lost vigour of his youth. He was always passionately fond of Nature, and forest scenery above all other stirred his very soul. He often stated that the two occasions on which his poetic sensibilities had been most vividly aroused had been his first reading of Goethe's *Iphigenia* and the vision of a glade of young oak trees on a May morning in Fontainebleau.

Deep as was his attachment to Savoy, he often pined there for his forests of Ardennes, those vast dim forests that at certain times of day and night are haunted by a mystic sense of supernatural joys and terrors.

Early in 1890 Taine undertook a study of the Church, which appeared in the form of three articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of May and June, 1891. He showed in

¹ The fine portrait of Taine by Léon Bonnat dates from 1889.

² See his article on the Ardennes in his *Derniers Essais de Critique et d'Histoire*, also that on Sainte-Odile.

this the same conscientiousness and absence of prejudice which had distinguished his other writings.

His articles on *L'École* appeared during the months of May, June and July, 1892. They were to be followed by a study of *L'Association et de la Famille*, then by *Le Milieu Moderne*, the last book of his great work. This was in some sort to be a summary of his conclusions.

These, like the final diagnosis of a doctor on a beloved patient, distressed him in advance. "I wonder," he said sometimes, "whether I shall have the courage to formulate them and write them down."

He was spared the painful task. September, 1892, saw the pen fall for ever from his hands, when but a few pages of *L'Association* had been written.

A sudden attack of his old malady had seized him in Savoy, from whence he was taken by his friends to Paris, there to await death during five months of cruel sufferings, heroically borne.¹ His mind remained clear until the end, which overtook him peacefully on Sunday, March 5, 1893.

According to his wishes his body rests in Savoy, on the hill which overlooks Boringe.

To Mr. Bernard Mallet.

Paris, January 26, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—M. André Michel has let me have the number of the *Edinburgh Review* in which your article appears.

I congratulate you on the skilful manner in which you

¹ See the fine pages of de Vogüe on *H. Taine, près de son lit de mort*, in *Devant le Siècle*.

LE RÉGIME MODERNE

conceal your natural feelings for your ancestor beneath the gravity of your argument and the impartiality of your discussion.

By aid of the *Mercure Britannique* you have refuted an objection which I have often heard, and which I have dealt with in the same way ; no one who is not a military expert and acquainted with the circumstances is competent to pass judgment upon Bonaparte after the 13th Vendémiaire, nor even after the Italian campaign nor the Egyptian expedition. It was Mallet du Pan who, after the 18th Brumaire, realized more quickly and more deeply than any other the far-reaching influence of the new revolution and the policy of the new master.

I am glad that Sir Louis takes some interest in my exposition of applied Socialism ; it is unfortunate that these accepted facts are powerless to resist the claims of a diseased digestive apparatus and the caprices of an affected brain. I fear that history and sober facts will not tend to encourage the new political economy.

A friend of mine, just returned from Germany, tells me that the danger there is more threatening than in France, and thinks of England just as you do.

My kind regards to your father.

To Professor Oscar Browning.

Paris, January 28, 1885.

DEAR SIR,—I must beg you to forgive my tardiness in replying to your letter, but I have changed my address and the letter was delayed.

It is with much pleasure and gratitude that I accept the

honour conferred upon me by the Royal Historical Society of London in naming me a corresponding member, and I beg you to express my thanks to the Society.

I learn with pleasure that the correspondence of Lord Gower is about to be published ; it will give me an opportunity of verifying my own conclusions. Several most enlightening *mémoires* of the period have been lent to me. I am now reading those of the Chancellor Pasquier, who was a Préfet of Police under Napoleon, and who was made a peer during the Restoration. You have, doubtless, read the two volumes of the correspondence of Mallet du Pan with the Court of Vienna, which I have got André Michel to publish. It all bears upon the same subject.

Yours, etc. . . .

To the Abbé Christian Moreau.

Menthon, June 15, 1885.

. . . I have not very much studied the subject of "Illuminisme" in France towards the close of the eighteenth century. It was more influential in Prussia and in Russia at that date.

Nevertheless it offers a strong point of interest in the history of the French Revolution, and you will find it worth your while to write the biography of the friend of Dom Gerles. The *mémoires* of Suzanne Labrousse are already in your hands, and there are many almost unknown manuscripts in Rome, in Perigord and in the Paris Archives. Your communications will be welcomed by every historian.

As a matter of course you will have to criticize your material. A mystic such as Suzanne Labrousse is a neurotic

who invents her visions to please her imagination and her pride, and before deceiving others she deceives herself. Her remembrances of past events would necessarily be influenced by her peculiar point of view, and should be carefully criticized before her account of Robespierre, the Jacobin leaders, and the Bishops of the Assemblée Constituante can be accepted. When a belief in a prophetic calling is coupled with a desire for making money it does not afford the best conditions for clear prophetic insight.

The biography of a prophetess is always interesting, even though she prove to be a fraud. The lives of Madame Guyon or of Antoinette Bourignon are nearly as valuable as those of Bunyan or the Quaker Fox. I shall read your book with great pleasure.¹ . . .

To Professor Oscar Browning.

Paris, November, 1885.

I have received the *Despatches of Lord Gower* and do not at all agree with the booksellers. Even from the anecdotal point of view they contain many interesting incidents, that, for instance, of the flight of two hundred Parisian families after the sacking of the Hôtel de Castris.

I allow that Lord Gower is neither far-sighted nor original, while his accounts are mostly based upon those of the Paris newspapers; but he is sensible and independent in his views, and the deep root that the anarchy had acquired is clearly revealed by his descriptions.

¹ This letter was published by the Abbé Moreau as an introduction to his book *Une Mystique Révolutionnaire, Suzette Labrousse.*

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The French correspondent of the Appendix is Mallet du Pan. To assure yourself of this you have only to read his *Memoirs* edited by Sayous, and his *Correspondence* by André Michel.

The diary of the second Viscount Palmerston is also very valuable for a historian.

To the Viscount E. M. de Vogüé.

Borlinge, June 8, 1886.

Many thanks for your book, which I have just received.¹ I have already been through it when it appeared in the form of articles, but I shall read it through again; it contains so many ideas that it is worth several readings. I must first congratulate you on the fine passage wherein you discuss the psychology of the Russian as revealed by his history; I consider this as the most advantageous method of dealing with any kind of history, inasmuch as it discusses the development of character, and everything depends on character.

Your treatment is original and suggestive.

As to *Rouge et Noir*, I agree with you on most points. Julien Sorel is altogether odious; so much the worse for those who take the novel as Beyle's masterpiece.

But I consider *La Chartreuse* incomparably superior to any other novel, English, French or Russian; the study of human nature is so true and deep, and accomplished by such simple means.

I should much like to talk with you on Tourguenief,

¹ *Le Roman Russe.*

especially on *Terres Vierges*. I bow to your judgment on this subject, as you know the types which served as models while I am unacquainted with them. From my point of view, however, the characters appear perfectly coherent and living, and brought out in clear relief, while in the matter of art and execution, simplicity of method and calculated effect, Tourguenief, as always, rises superior. Compared with him, Dostoievsky and Tolstoi seem to me but ignorant geniuses, who achieve powerful works without knowing the secrets of their craft. You who are a true artist, a master of style, must appreciate his merit.

To Madame H. Taine.

Champel, September 2, 1886.

. . . I am certainly a little better here, and am reading without over-fatigue for about two hours a day a volume I have found here, the *Life of W. Penn*, by Hepworth Dixon. It is a good biography, well authenticated, and has an interesting appendix which refutes what Macaulay says of Penn. It seems evident that Macaulay imputed two or three bad actions to him which Penn never committed, the reason of this being that he mistook two namesakes of his, George and Neville Penn, for the great Quaker. He has certainly been over-hasty, even prejudiced, in his judgment; as a humanist and rationalist Macaulay bore some grudge against Quakers, against Penn and Fox.

As the girls are taking up some serious reading, let them have from me Edouard de Suckau's book on Marcus Aurelius, also that by Hume in the English original on the principles of Moral Law.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF H. TAINÉ

I am rather uneasy at their reading *King Lear* ; it contains so many coarse allusions, as is the case nearly everywhere in Shakespeare ; there are fewer in *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet* and *As you Like It*.

Let them read the first book of the *Faery Queen*, and the first book of *Paradise Lost*.

*To F. Nietzsche.*¹

Menthon, October 17, 1886.

SIR,—On my return from a journey I found the book that you were good enough to send me ; as you express it, it is full of thoughts that pierce behind the veil.² Its vivid literary style and often paradoxical expression will open the eyes of the reader who wants to be initiated.

I shall recommend to philosophers what you say upon philosophy (pp. 14, 17, 20, 25), but historians and critics will also find a store of new ideals, for instance on pp. 41, 75, 76, 149, 150.

What you say upon national character and genius in your eighth essay is infinitely suggestive. I shall re-read this passage, although it speaks far too flatteringly of myself.³

You greatly honour me in your letter by ranking me with Monsieur Burckhardt de Bâle, whom I so much admire.

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche was born at Roecken, near Luetzen, 1844. He was struck with general paralysis towards the close of 1888 and died at Weimar, August 25, 1900. His correspondence with Taine was published in the third volume of his *Gesammelte Briefe*.

² *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*.

³ P. 207, "*Taines . . . das heisst des ersten lebenden Historikers. . .*"

LE RÉGIME MODERNE

I think that I was the first in France to draw the attention of the press to his great work, the *Culture de la Renaissance en Italie*.

With many thanks, believe me, etc.

*To Her Imperial Highness, the Princess Matilde.*¹

Paris, February 19, 1887.

PRINCESS,—I am deeply grieved at having hurt you. Deign, though, to re-read my portrait of Mme. Laetitia ; I

¹ Princess Matilde Laetitia Wilhelmine Bonaparte, daughter of King Jerome, was born 1820 and died January 4, 1904. The princess addressed the following letter to Taine upon the appearance of his first article on Napoleon Bonaparte in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of February 15, 1887.

SIR,—I read in your article entitled "Napoleon Bonaparte," that my grandmother was parsimonious and indifferent to cleanliness. Allow me to correct this twofold error.

She was generous. Her children sought her out in times of need and found their confidence amply justified.

As to her appearance,—though simply clad, she was scrupulously neat. When blindness came upon her, her small white hands sought occupation in her spinning wheel, the while her thoughts roamed back in the memories of the past. She lived but in the past. My brother and myself alone are left of those who knew her.

I affirm that you have been misled, and that only the pamphleteers you quote could have so calumniated her.

She never forced herself into fame, yet her self-oblivion has not sufficed to preserve her memory intact.

Her claim to honour was that she had borne the Emperor Napoleon I, whom she loved with reverence and admiration. This only is her crime.

Why must hatred seek to vilify the great memory of the Emperor, and attack the son through the mother ?

Veillez recevoir, Monsieur, l'expression de tous mes sentiments distingués.

MATILDE.

think you will find there nothing but esteem and even admiration. I beg you also to notice that my authorities are no "pamphleteers," but Napoleon himself; all that is quoted in the text and in the note are his own expressions. Stanislas Girardin is only mentioned in order to indicate a development, a conversation recorded at the moment of utterance, in which you will see revealed, if you refer to it, her primitive, naive and wholly maternal spirit.

The words "too parsimonious" were used by Napoleon; this does not deny her the generosity which, in case of need, will sacrifice and give everything it can. I used the phrase intentionally and on the authority of Napoleon himself.

There seems but one word left to wound you, the word "cleanliness." I will look up my authorities and withdraw it should it seem misplaced. However, in the period mentioned, before 1796, in Corsica and France, among so many miseries of a wandering life, a woman, half Italian, half peasant, burdened with many children, and suffering from dire poverty, would economize in linen and find but little time to tend her hands. I have noticed this among old ladies that I met with in my childhood. One such was a true head of her family, a commanding spirit worthy of obedience, she was termed "the Colonel" by her neighbours of the little town. But she never forgot the time when soap was lacking and when necessity entailed the wearing of one shirt a week. •

I feel the more regret in having wounded you, in that my second article will probably do so still more.

When I asked you whether you would object to the publication of my essay, I briefly summarized my con-

clusions on the Emperor—" the great genius of the modern world, with egoism equal to his genius." I should like the essay that you have just read to plead with you on behalf of that which follows. Unless I am mistaken, the immensity of this genius has never before been measured with such exactitude and with such careful verification. I have not treated it rhetorically; I have not loaded it with adjectives; I have pointed out "*les trois atlas internes* " always before that extraordinary mind ; also the still more striking faculty of combination, the inexhaustible and grandiose constructive imagination which makes him a posthumous brother of Dante and of Michael Angelo.

Pardon, if you can, the second part, for the sake of the first. It is hard sometimes to write history as an unbiassed chronicler. I have affronted the Royalists by my discovery of the exact amount of direct taxation under the *ancien régime*, the 81 per cent. of revenue extorted from the peasant by royal, seigneurial and ecclesiastical taxation. I have still more deeply offended the Republicans and all the powers now in the ascendant by revealing the Revolution as it really was,—in the first place a rural Jacquerie, in the second the dictatorship of a town mob. I am now bound to alienate the partisans of the Empire and the admirers of the centralized, highly administrated and paternally governed France of to-day. I have already resigned myself to such hostility.

I cannot, however, resign myself to the loss of a friendship such as yours. For twenty years I have found it so constant and so helpful that my gratitude towards you is unalterable. All that I ask of you is to believe in this gratitude, under all possible circumstances ; and to believe me now, as ever, in my devotion and regard.

*To the Editor of the "Journal des Débats."*¹

March 3, 1887.

. . . It is disagreeable to have to speak of oneself, and it is not my custom ; I find myself, however, obliged to do so now. Several French and English papers have published and commented on a conversation attributed to me, imputing to me an opinion on French literature and culture that I have never held. I was under the impression that a writer need only hold himself responsible for opinions that he had written and signed ; it appears, however, that I have been mistaken.

A few days ago an unexpected visitor showed me a list of forty well-known English writers, asking me whether it seemed possible for England to form an association analogous to our French Academy. I replied in the affirmative. My interlocutor appeared to consider it improbable ; I, therefore, by way of argument, showed him some proofs of a new English dictionary, a great and admirable work published by the Philological Society ; such a dictionary as that argues a possible Academy. I then believed the incident was closed, never imagining that other words, ill understood and ill transcribed, could be published under my name and without my consent. I am now bound to publish my personal opinion, in order that others need no longer feel obliged to think for me.

Upon the comparative merits of *savants*, properly so called, in France, in Germany and England, I do not venture to formulate an opinion ; if I wished to give one I should consult my friends MM. Joseph Bertrand, Berthelot, Pas-

¹ This letter appeared in the *Débats* of March 5, 1887.

teur, and Gaston Paris. I have always held it foolish to express an opinion not founded on competent knowledge.

Matters with which I am better acquainted are literature and history. I consider that English poetry, especially that of the narrative and lyrical order, from Byron, Keats, and Shelley to Tennyson and the two Brownings stands first in Europe. France, on the other hand, can show the greatest living dramatists,—Augier and Alexandre Dumas.

In prose the French appear to me at least on an equal footing with the English ; I consider Balzac the most powerful creator of character since the days of Shakespeare ; no critic in any literature can be compared to Sainte-Beuve. *La Chartreuse de Parme* is in my opinion a masterpiece of literary psychology, the greatest ever produced in any language. In style and *rendu*, intensity and colouring, *Madame Bovary* stands unrivalled. Five writers and thinkers, Balzac, Stendhal, Sainte-Beuve, Guizot and Renan, strike me as having most contributed to the knowledge of human nature and society since the time of Montesquieu.

We are now at the close of a literary period ; yet, as well as three or four novelists and poets, we see among us several writers of exceptional ability, including the historians Lavissee, Sorel and Thureau-Dangin.

To pass judgment in this way requires a casting off of national pride and prejudice. One must not over-estimate national achievements, yet too much self-depreciation is unnecessary.

It can be affirmed, I think, that in the world's literature of the last sixty years France has produced as great ideas, as beautiful expression, as the most illustrious of her rivals.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF H. TAINÉ

To Jules Lemaître.

March 28, 1887.

. . . I used Bourrienne and Mme. de Rémusat only after much deliberation and in connection with several other sources. No one contests the authenticity of Bourrienne's first volume, and it is from this that I have chiefly drawn, as Bourrienne was his only comrade at Brienne and in July and August, 1792. For a later period his evidence is nearly always equally valuable. From Mme. de Rémusat I have taken little but her impressions as to Napoleon's manners and general personality; on this, being a woman and a well brought up woman, she is competent to speak. Her impressions tally with those of Metternich, Varnhagen, Thibaudeau, etc.

An excellent authority to which I continually resort is de Ségur. He remained Napoleon's staunch admirer, generous and disinterested to the last. This refutes the accusation brought against me of having consulted those only who were hostile.

As to the three atlases, their exactitude and fulness, I would direct your attention to the correspondence of the indicated dates; to give such precise orders, such technical and detailed instructions, the atlases I mention were indispensable. To convince oneself, however, one should devote whole weeks to the correspondence, not only reading it but dreaming it, in order to realize the insistence and ability with which he watches the execution of his orders.

I have never denied his being capable of emotion and of sympathy; and have, on the contrary, expressly noted this trait in his character and given striking proofs of it in a passage from Bourrienne.

LE RÉGIME MODERNE

It is particularly this that distinguishes him from other men of firm determination, from calculating minds such as Frederic II of Prussia and William III of England. He is no cold statue ; no sensibility was ever more acute ; as in most men of new and unmixed races his passions are very strongly marked. He has all the moods and impulses of an Italian, of an artist ; the sudden vehemence, enthusiasm, the sudden storms of anger ; there is nothing of Teutonic coldness in him, hence the astounding beauty of his will, that could so subject the wild steeds of his emotions to a definitely marked-out course.

You are, doubtless, right as to the mystical tendencies which served to nourish his pride. I have touched but slightly on his dominating personality, his rôle of *Petit Caporal*. He had genius, success ; he played his part attentively, with consummate art. But to explain his general influence, I should have had to depict the soldier of the day, the Frenchman of 1800, for which I had no space ; meanwhile, the *Cahiers de Coignet*, Mérimée's *Mécontents* and *Espagnols en Danemark* well describe the lieutenant of that time.

As to the lack of progressive development in my study, my object was to follow the successive stages of his conception of mankind, from his early childhood, through his visits home to Corsica, then in France to the Tenth of August, and in Vendémiaire, then in Italy, Egypt and France up to the Consulate. Here, though, I have probably been wrong ; I have failed in my effect upon the reader. You who see the right side of the web can judge more accurately ; I who stand behind like a worker at the Gobelins can only conjecture the effect of my different threads.

I must thank you for your *finale*. I have assuredly a criterium for the history of mankind, as I have also for the history of Art and Science. There is one standard by which philosophers and *savants* should be judged; another one for writers, poets, painters, artists. There is a third standard for determining the worth of men of politics and action; the test is this: has the man under consideration tried to diminish, not augment, the total sum of present and future human suffering? This, to my mind, is the fundamental question. This is what I asked of the *Ancien Régime* in my chapter on the People, and what I asked of the Revolution in the chapter on the Governed. I can say this to you as you are a master of the craft, but I could not say it to the general public. Any advertisement of private feeling is my bugbear. As poor Gautier used to tell us, one should never moan, at any rate so loudly that one's readers notice it.

Very cordially yours.

To F. Nietzsche.

Champel-sur-Arve, Genève, June 12, 1887.

. . . I am very glad that my articles on Napoleon strike you as being true to life; nothing can more exactly summarize my impression of him than the two German words you use concerning him: *Unmensch und Uebermensch*—Inhuman and Superhuman.¹

¹ Nietzsche had written to Taine à propos of his essay on Napoleon: "Ich war nicht übel auf sie vorbereitet durch ein neuerdings erschienenenes Buch Barbey d'Aurevilles, dessen Schlusskapital—über neue Napoleon-litteratur—wie ein langer Schrei des Verlangens klang; wonach doch?—unzweifelhaft gerade nach einer solchen Erklärung und Auflösung jenes ungeheuren Problems von Unmensch und Uebermensch, wie Sie sie uns gegeben haben."

LE RÉGIME MODERNE

To Madame H. Taine.

Champel, July 7, 1887.

. . . I am reading a novel called *Hannah*, by Mrs. Craik. It is as touching, noble and idealistic as everything she writes, "unspotted from the world." But it is dangerous for young girls to read; she takes as motto Dryden's theme of Antony and Cleopatra—the World Well Lost, or All for Love—and draws the imaginations and demands of the affections out of all due proportion, the principle being that marriage must not be entered upon except with a sentiment of unique, extraordinary and eternal devotion, otherwise sacrilege would be committed. I met the authoress at M. Guizot's; she remained unmarried, dreaming of maternity and love, till the age of thirty-five, and then married a man younger than herself.

Here is an echo from the *Figaro*, whether true or false it is important. "If a Floquet-Boulanger cabinet had been formed it would have meant certain war with Germany within the next month. The Prince of Wales sought out the Comte de Paris on purpose to warn him of the danger, and the Count then persuaded the Right to support Rouvier's administration." If this be true, the Comte de Paris, even in his absence, is the most useful Frenchman to France.

Your account of the Boulanger affair is very interesting; it has always been twelve to fifteen thousand street loafers that have caused our Paris revolutions. M. Rouvier spoke very seriously about the matter yesterday. Even Clemenceau has shaken himself free from the influence of his be-plumed hero. It is quite evident that we were being led into a war, just as France was led into one by the

LIFE AND LETTERS OF H. TAINE

Fructidoriens, in order that those gentlemen should not lose their posts. And to think that X—— was clinging to them !

July 14, 1887.

Here are six lines of Tennyson that I have copied for you ; they seem to me very beautiful, both as to metre and expression.

THE EAGLE.

He clasps the rock with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands
Ring'd with the azure world he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

This consoles me for the cock's crest mode of *coiffeur* and the Hottentot-like adornments that the ladies here so pitilessly exhibit ! One's best resource is to bear all in silence and to read a page of Marcus Aurelius now and then !

I am uneasy about what is going on in Paris. The new Government and the pampered police of to-day are not prepared to resist the madness of a mob.

To Madame H. Taine.

Champel, July 20, 1887.

. . . I have read Lavissee's article, which is very good and advises tact and patience. On the whole it is always the foreign danger—French and Russian, and particularly the Russian—that maintains and will maintain the military monarchy so crushing in its influence in Germany.

LE RÉGIME MODERNE

The *Figaro* and the *Journal de Genève* announce that Prince Napoleon is publishing a book entitled *Les Détracteurs de Napoléon*, and that the said book contains a portrait “*très piquant*” of your humble servant. This will place me in a difficult position. How can one combat a man whose guest one has been, and who takes advantage of the delicacy by which one’s lips are sealed?

Read an article in the *Scientific Monthly* by the Rev. W. H. Freemantle on the reconciliation of Christianity and science. Would to heaven that a French priest could write like that! . . .

To Georges Patinot.

Boringe, September 22, 1887.

I have read the book you tell me about, and think as you do that it is not worth a reply.¹

It is quite evident (pp. 47-50) according to the expressions that I quote, that the letter was dictated, not written, by Napoleon.²

As to the reproach of not having consulted Fain, Ménéval —[*the manuscript is torn here*] Gaudin, Mollien and Champagny, and of having hardly opened the correspondence, my notes and quotations are sufficient refutation.

To the objection that I have made use of those hostile to Napoleon because they were interesting, it suffices to

¹ *Napoléon et ses Détracteurs*, by Prince Napoleon.

² Prince Napoleon accused Taine of having quoted a letter from Duroc as written by Napoleon. A note appearing in the first edition of the *Régime Moderne*, Book I, *Napoléon Bonaparte*, clearly shows that the letter in question was written by Duroc at Napoleon’s dictation. The note does not appear in the subsequent editions.

remark that in this case it would be wrong to have recourse to his partisans and followers, as they are also interesting.

I am merely a historian. A politician cannot be this at all. He is claimed by his party in advance, as a devotee is claimed by the Church. Between two such different types of mind discussion would be useless.

It is good of you to try to recall me to the ranks, to rejoin the flag. If I were of your age and had your health I should respond with alacrity. I am a veteran, however, fatigued by forty years of service; very slowly and with failing strength I am on my last march.

If I were ever to regain my strength, you know that I would join you—the *Débats* will always be the only paper for me.

*To André Chevrillon.*¹

October 2, 1887.

Do not worry about your lack of information on the period of Sydney Smith; wait at least till you can verify what you find in Brest. In any case it is inadvisable to begin by studying the *milieu* and contemporaries of one's subject; one becomes lost in accessories and surroundings. My experience tells me to begin with the man himself, with the man as author, and to deal first with his leading work. This is what I advise you to do. First read *Peter Plymley* thoroughly, pen in hand; note the vocabulary, the con-

¹ To his nephew, André Chevrillon, then teacher of English in the Naval School at Brest, Taine had proposed Sydney Smith as subject of a book. This appeared in 1894 under the title, *Sydney Smith et la Renaissance des Idées Libérales en Angleterre au XIX Siècle*.

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struction of the paragraphs, the *mise-en-scène*, the literary effect and the method used in order to impress the reader. Then read the other masterpieces of "humour," the *Tale of a Tub*, the *Drapier Letters*, the *Book of Snobs*, Arbuthnot on *Miss Scotland and Mr. John Bull*, and two or three good ironical sketches by Addison.

Then turn to Courier; read his *Chambord*, and *Pamphlet des Pamphlets*; read Voltaire's *Candide* and the beginning of his *Jenny*; also Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* on Louis XIV, on Impurities, on Courtisanes, also his *Esprit des Lois* on slavery.

This accomplished you will have all the characteristics (by means of opposition and similitude) of the talent of Sydney Smith, and you will be able to trace its origin by discussing the common source of humour in general, then of the English humour in particular.

The author thus defined, then turn to the man himself, his disposition and conduct as given by biography. . . . You will need three or four months for all this, and then, and not before, you should make a closer study of his social environment. Some idea of this you will have gained through Miss Austen, Byron, Coleridge, Walter Scott, also through my *Littérature Anglaise*. The two volumes of Chambers are still more copious, and you can derive advantage from the *Edinburgh Review* and the biographies of contemporaries, as Jeffrey, and Lord Brougham, also from the histories of that day, Lecky's, Alison's, etc.

Follow this plan and do not venture upon confusing details of the general history, the politics, etc., of the time; you would find it difficult to generalize with sufficient exacti-

tude. Believe in my advice. I carried out this method in writing on La Fontaine, Titus Livius, Cousin and the rest, as also on the English authors; the kernel of all first research must be the man as author, and with the author his chief work. Everything else is accessory.

. . . A means of help, which I regret not having more used in my youth, is to force oneself to pay calls two or three times in the week, and to meet men and women of a different age at evening parties. This helps one to forget oneself and one's despondency, and on returning home one can make notes upon the homes and the people one has seen. You have a new world around you which is worth your while to study—from the sailor to the Admiral, and a definite organization, that of the French Navy, without counting the townspeople and the travellers from afar. Nothing is more useful for one interested in human nature and the studies that concern it, and what I thus learned at Nevers and Poitiers has helped me very much. Go to see the hospitals, both military and civil; enter the law-courts, watch the workmen of the State. Seek to understand the mental outlook of so many different human beings, and try to determine the value of the constraint to which they are subjected,—for themselves in particular and for the State in general. You will learn more in this way than through books, and the contact with actual reality tends to diminish the depression of oversensibility. . . .

To André Chevrillon.

October 12, 1887.

. . . You will certainly find what you need to know as

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to the Parliamentary debates of 1825-32 in the biographies of Canning, Palmerston, etc. Read also the autobiography of Stuart Mill, who took an active part in the great movement. I would remind you that in his opinion, and he was a good judge, the two men to inoculate England with Continental ideas were of differing schools of thought, and that these two were Coleridge and Bentham.

You should on no account give up your work on Sydney Smith this year ; it will be an "*alibi*" for you, an intellectual stimulant. Do not confine yourself to merely mechanical erudition, you need a cordial for your mind. Believe in my advice as an experienced dissector of human nature ; to start upon the social, political, economic issues of the day would be a great mistake ; my advice would be the same were you to spend the year in Paris or in London. I have no time at present to explain all my reasons for mapping out this particular method, but if you have any confidence in me, follow it as I direct, and begin to translate while taking notes. After translating *Peter Plymley* you should summarize the chief ideas of Sydney Smith upon Religion and Philosophy, Church and State, Literature and Art, with extracts from his writings to support the views. This is what I did in my essay on Macaulay, before attempting to define and analyse his talent. Re-read this passage ; you will see it makes an excellent introduction ; and nothing is more easy, you have only to extract and classify.

Above all, be taking general notes (disguising names, of course, and keeping them quite private) as to the homes and lives of those you meet. What you write to me as to your impressions of Brest and the provincial towns of France is excellent ; I am keeping your letter, as also that in which

you described your English surroundings. It is accurate and full of colour ; when you have written a hundred such impressions on other subjects you will be in possession of a literary storehouse from which you can draw upon all your life. . . .

Have courage, boy ! At Nevers, thirty-five years ago, I should have written just your letter ! I suffered from the same depression and had no counsellors, no guides. I found a refuge and consolation in study ; I counsel you to do the same and to become an author ; this will help you to bear the Present.

Affectionately.

To Georges Patinot.

Borings, October 25, 1887.

I have just read the volume (*Le Journal des Goncourts*) and I think as you and Renan do ; so I shall make no remonstrance either through the *Débats* or otherwise. The indiscretions concerning me are not offensive ; once or twice I am made to say what I have never thought, but this is done with no ill intent ; the author, for want of sufficient culture, has not understood what was said in his presence. I beg you to believe that if the Dîner Magny had been such as it is here represented, I should not have attended it more than three times ; fortunately, however, besides the publishers of the paper in question, there were present such people as Sainte-Beuve, Renan, Robin, Berthelot, Nefftzer, Schérer, Flaubert, sometimes George Sand ; people well versed in science or philology, philosophy or theology, well acquainted with foreign languages and literatures, classical

antiquity, the Orient and history ; these subjects formed the basis of conversation which was worth being listened to. Unfortunately the topics were above the heads of the two stenographers, whose horizon was bounded by Gavarni, minor artists of the eighteenth century and Japanese curios ; they had no interests beyond this limited sphere, which was entirely dominated by their own personalities. But their indiscretion remains. You well know that I wrote to M. de Goncourt on the appearance of his first volume to beg him for the sake of old comradeship to make no mention of me in the record. As he did this notwithstanding, all is now over between us ; henceforth if I were to attend the dinner again I should first inquire as to whether he were to be present, and in that case I should withdraw. I should imagine that his associates, even the Princess Matilde, must share my view of him. Every private opinion expressed in his presence is liable to appear transformed in print. In this respect, I consider he has behaved badly towards Sainte-Beuve ; Sainte-Beuve who was exceptionally kind to him and to his brother, and who, by his two so favourable articles, gave them their introduction into literary circles ; Sainte-Beuve, who, on founding the *Dîner Magny*, bound him to literary discretion. Notice his own words in the *Nouveaux Lundis* with regard to a far less serious fault of de Pontmartin's. Were he still living, I can imagine his surprise and indignation ; literary manners are certainly deteriorating !

To André Chevrillon.

Paris, November 8, 1887.

MY DEAR ANDRÉ,—I took out Sydney Smith from the Bibliothèque on the day of my arrival, and am still reading him. Here are some suggestions ; but if they do not appeal to you, if the subject does not attract you, it is clear that you should not undertake it. One cannot write well unless one is drawn to one's subject. If this is not the case with you here, seek some other theme ; we all have our own predilections. Among good reasons for treating Sydney Smith is that you will learn to write through him, since the whole subject is a study of the art of writing for the general public and of influencing the public to particular views on politics and religion. Sydney Smith was remarkably successful in an art that has always been cultivated in England,—the art of practical eloquence, not of mere rhetoric. He is its most distinguished representative during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Analyse his methods ; compare them with those of his great English predecessors, then with those of the French from Voltaire and Beaumarchais to Courier. When you have once classified and defined these methods, you can make use of them in your own work, especially with regard to style and literary effect. You have probably the same edition as I have. I will indicate for you on a separate page the passages that can be quoted in your essay ; there are a great many, not only in *Peter Plymley*, but in the *Letters to Archdeacon Singleton*, in the speeches at Beverley and Taunton, and in nearly all the articles. Here are my suggestions.

You do not need to study more than twenty volumes for

your subject. Get up Macaulay, also Trevelyan's *Biography of Macaulay*. Read Miss Austen; George Eliot, for her types of clergymen and local aristocracy; the biographies of Canning and Palmerston; Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, Chambers's *Encyclopaedia of English Literature*, the autobiography of Stuart Mill, with his essays on Coleridge and Bentham; and some concise history of the leading political reforms and features between 1793 and 1832.

Sydney Smith has no views on philosophy and art. . . . However, his system of practical opinions is very interesting to follow. It affords an insight into the social, political and ecclesiastical aspects of England such as they presented themselves to him. He adds to this his views on political economy and moral law, for the first of which he is Conservative, in the second a Progressive.

Some expressions quoted from his book would give a very complete picture of English life in 1820, especially of ecclesiastical life, with figures and details not found elsewhere (see *Letters to Archdeacon Singleton*).

You are right as to the mediocrity of his plans. His letters and pamphlets are merely newspaper articles or speeches suitable for meetings. All the better though. He gives just the necessary note of persuasion for an ordinary audience. His superiority, and his most powerful method, lies in the use of illustration, apologue and parable, the transcription of an abstract question into some trivial example, some amusing anecdote, which appeals to the imagination and is recounted to others by the hearer. Courier does the same and much more artistically, but Courier is less convincing, less adapted to the masses, and far less practical in his influence.

The mental attitude that produces such a method is a very healthy one, far more so than that of Swift, Voltaire or Courier. Sydney Smith is of the race of Fielding, frank, bold and breezy, full of persistent joviality. He affords no trace of misanthropy, hypocrisy, puling sentimentality or self-delusion. This is confirmed by his theories as to the English Church. The English clergyman is to be a gentleman ; he must have capital ; he must aim at the high places of ecclesiastical preferment, these being the big numbers in the lottery. This coincides with his own life, his optimistic way of looking at things, his opposition to dissent, demagoguery, asceticism. It is impossible to have a finer specimen of the higher type of English clergyman. Sainte-Beuve would have delighted in the study.

As to *Peter Plymley*, his chief work, you must sketch out the plan of the book, summarize the arguments scattered through the different letters, state the matter better than Sydney Smith has done, but quoting his best passages, which consist of his illustrations and examples, as well as his *bons mots*. The character of Abraham, his position, his prejudices, forms a good introductory portrait, the study of a narrow-minded rather vulgar clergyman, much like Pascal's good Jesuit, and it deserves separate handling.

There is much analogy between the ideas of Sydney Smith and those of Macaulay, on all the questions of the day concerning Church, politics, society, and political economy. Macaulay seems to have taken most of his ideas from Sydney Smith in order to develop them with his admirable art of composition and elucidation.

Begin by extracting and translating the striking passages most illuminating in their effect upon the reader. These

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will prove the chief interest of your book. Arrange these passages, frame them in words of your own setting in as nearly the same tone as you can manage.

Affectionately always.

To Georges Brandès.¹

Paris, April 23, 1888.

DEAR SIR,—I was much touched by your remembrance of me. It would give me pleasure to think that I had been of service to you, as you maintain is the case; as one grows old such things are one's chief comfort. Life, for a worker, is spent in sowing seed; but he cannot know whether what he casts into the furrows will spring up, and, however careful his selection, he often finds himself mistaken, and sees seed growing that he had not meant to plant.

I always hear with much interest all that concerns your life. I know that you are married, but I do not know whether you have children and whether you have a definite post at Copenhagen. Your last volume on the literary school from Victor Hugo to Th. Gautier is the best I know upon the subject. Shall you continue this great history of the thought and talent of the nineteenth century? ²

¹ Brandès had written the following letter to Taine, dated April 16, 1888:—

DEAR MASTER,—Your sixtieth birthday is approaching. Allow one of your old disciples, who writes slightly beforehand in order not to be lost in the general crowd of well-wishers, to take this opportunity of expressing his good wishes and his deep gratitude for all that you have done for him. . . . I shall never forget the impression made upon me by your words and your advice; you have been one of the benefactors of my life.

² *Die Litteratur des XIX^{ten} Jahrhunderts in ihren Hauptströmungen*. Vol. V., *Die romantische Schule in Frankreich*. Leipzig, 1883.

With regard to myself, I have two children, and I live for six or seven months of the year beside the Lac d'Annecy, at Menthon-Saint-Bernard, in Haute Savoie. For some months past I have been obliged to suspend my work, my head being tired ; I hope, however, to resume work on my last volume, and perhaps to finish it this year ; this will be the conclusion of my *Origines de la France Contemporaine*. My premonitions of the future are sad, and what is going on around me is sadder still. Your country, too, has been mutilated ; it is small though, and that is a protection against great danger and bloodshed. I wish that I could think this of my own. . . .

*To Armand Lods.*¹

Menthon, July 15, 1888.

. . . The details that you give show the origin of the Jacobin fury and the facility with which the demagogue becomes a tyrant.

Many of the traits are most valuable ; for instance, the absolute Jesuitism of the letter of February 17 (p. 53) ; the very interesting letter of the Citoyenne La Sandraye (p. 69) and that ingenuous idea of Bernard's for making a rich prisoner and a poor one sleep in the same bed. If your book had appeared earlier I should have borrowed this fine application of the principles of equality ; I have not met with it elsewhere. It is a pity that you have not found anything as to his life in the provinces after the Amnesty of Brumaire, nor as to his rôle in the General Council of

¹ Author of *Un Conventionnel en Mission, Bernard de Saintes, et la Réunion de Montbéliard à la France*.

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Charente-Inférieure from 1800 to 1804. Did he vote for the consulship for life and for the Empire? We have biographies of two or three men of the same type, including that of the patriot Palloy by V. Fournel; Palloy was the man who dealt so advantageously with the stones of the Bastille. Towards the end of the Directoire he employed an original method for marrying his daughter, and I have come across his name in a report of 1810 upon the seizure of a book of which he was the author.

We are also indebted to you for the account of the annexation of Montbéliard; most of the other annexations, Belgium, Savoy, Geneva, Piedmont, were carried out with equal brutality.

To Émile Boutmy.

September 9, 1888.

. . . I do not mention politics; my views are just as gloomy as your own. At Champel, in the presence of foreigners from various countries, I felt quite ashamed; our Government and our literature are scandalous. One's only refuge is in private life and philosophic curiosity. I took my Gospel with me, that of Marcus Aurelius; he is the Evangelist for us who have questioned philosophy and science; to those of our intellectual standing he is what Jesus is to the people.

Have his book by you at night and read three or four passages every morning; it will be enough to feed your thoughts during the day. I specially recommend the last three books. No one ever spoke or wrote with such truth and sublimity on Nature and on Death. Each word in the Greek

is charged with meaning, passion, imagery, and with such precision that the sculptured style of the *Institutes* is not superior. It is indeed the final covenant of the antique world, a world much healthier than ours; and but few of its formulas need be altered to adapt to it the conclusions of our modern researches.

An old man like myself finds in it just the food that he needs for his declining years, and finds it flavoured to perfection. Let us resign ourselves as he did, friend! his reasons still hold good. . . .

To the Vicomte E. M. de Vogüé.

Borlänge, October 20, 1888.

. . . My health, as to which you are kind enough to inquire, is not good; outwardly and physically it is passable; but as soon as I try to write I am burdened with fatigue, then follows nervous excitement and insomnia. . . . I belong to a dying generation, you young men must take our places; in politics and public matters you will have no difficulty in doing better, at any rate in not doing quite so badly. The closing years of this century leave France in a lamentable condition; I cannot at all resign myself to things. . . .

You are right in re-reading and delighting in Macaulay¹;

¹ De Vogüé had written to Taine, October 18, 1888: "The long days of railway travelling between Kharkof and Paris seemed short to me, as I spent them in re-reading Macaulay's *History*, of which I had had but an inadequate recollection. How strong and substantial it is! How each line makes one feel the quiet security of the English genius.

"The story advances with the calm confidence of one of their great

head and heart are sound with him, and as to art and style he has not his peer in all Europe ! In England he is less appreciated than he used to be—the worse for England !

To Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

Paris, February 1, 1889.

MADAME,—I am greatly honoured and pleased by the gift you have been kind enough to send me.¹ The two photographs of Westmorland scenery add to its value.

The author of *Robert Elsmere* is one of the first to point out by delicate touches the influence of heredity, the link that binds the child to his distant ancestors, to his race in general, and to the thoughts and customs born of atmosphere and soil. Robert, like Catherine, is quite the child of his parents and his grandparents on both sides. There is a new vein of psychology in this, and it is not the least of the author's merits to have discovered it and followed it.

The article in the *Débats* strikes every one as inexact and superficial. I consider the novel in question superior to all that have appeared in England since George Eliot wrote, and it stands above George Eliot's in that it deals with one of the two great problems of the century, the gradual transformation of Christianity. Further, the solution that it offers is possible, even plausible; more cannot be required. It is no proselytizing medium; the author's personal ships, that knows it is made of good strong oak and never doubts a moment as to its regal sway over creation. I consider that there is no better book to recommend to one's children in these anaemic times; people should be made to read it just as they are made to take steel pills. . . ."

¹ *Robert Elsmere.*

opinion, though sufficiently indicated, remains in the background; it does not intervene, as in Octave Feuillet's *Sibylle*, or Georges Sand's *Mlle. de la Quintinie*, to the subordination of the human interest. The author's creed can as well be imagined in that of Gray as in that of Robert.

I should fancy that there must have been alterations or omissions, since Catherine's mother and her sister Agnes are quite effaced in the second volume. Rose, however, plays a greater part; I should have considered that her story needed another corresponding episode to balance it, which would have been the history of Agnes. Rose's betrothed seems also incomplete and rather hastily brought on the scenes. As to the Squire, his personality is so striking and so tortured that I regret the brevity with which he is dismissed; some strange tragedy must have been enacted in that soul those last few months; the author is equal to the task of describing it in detail.

The scene that you recall comes back to me. A little vaguely through the shadows of the past I perceive a young girl, dark and graceful, at the dinner party given by the master of Balliol; Swinburne among the guests, in a blue tie, gesticulating in staccato fashion. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

Champel, August, 1889.

I had the four volumes of *The Ring and the Book* yesterday. . . it is big reading and will be a good psychological occupation for me at Champel. I am now reading the correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson; Emerson I like very much; Carlyle, as ever, very little, but one

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must be sorry for his chronic dyspepsia and his twelve years of extreme poverty.

The article by Saint-Genest is a good symptom ; and that by Lemaître yesterday upon Ibsen the Norwegian is most interesting. Is our social and moral decadence also affecting the peoples of the North ? Ibsen has struck the root, the primitive difference between the two conceptions of life. I should like to talk to Lavissee, and find out whether he foresees a probable break in the organization of Germany in this direction. You are aware that it is so in England, through the secularism of the English artisans. . . .

To Madame H. Taine.

September 3, 1889.

. . . I have read a good deal of *The Ring and the Book*. Robert Browning is a great poet, a profound student of human nature, a powerful historian, but he never thinks about his reader. He makes his characters talk as if no one were reading their discourses, and he makes them talk on, through fifteen hundred or two thousand lines in succession, so influenced are they by their ideas, and so full is he of his subject. It is a tragic story like that in *L'Abbesse de Castro*, or in Stendhal's *Vittoria Accoramboni*, an Italian drama, domestic and murder-tinged, related in turn, and from every possible point of view, by the ten actors, patients, murderers, judges, etc. A perfect monument, in fact, of psychological construction, most attractive to a very leisured student, but inaccessible to the general public, even the intelligent portion of it. . . .

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To Paul Bourget.

Menthon, September 29, 1889.

I was not able to write long letters on receiving *Le Disciple*, and am hardly able even yet ; to concentrate my attention is an effort to me.

My second reason for delay you can well guess ; why wound a man uselessly that one esteems and cares for ? Nevertheless, since you ask for my criticism I will give it.

In style, talent, perspicacity, psychological analysis of a complicated character, careful study of the furthest determining causes, you have never done better work, and as M. Brunetière, whose ideas are so different from your own, has taken up your cause, your success is thus complete. The general effect made by it on me, however, is sad, almost painful. Two apparent arguments stand out clearly in my mind, and both seem to me regrettable.

The first, especially for those without strong and well seasoned moral convictions, is that Greslou calls for indulgence, that he is only half guilty. Many young fellows not yet rooted into life, and all men more or less uprooted from a moral standpoint, will find him interesting, almost attractive, and may end by thinking just as he does. He had high ambitions, he worked hard, he showed courage at the last ; and all through his history he so skilfully discusses his inward conflicts, the origin of his ideas, the details and transitions of the motives of his actions, that these actions seem natural, even plausible sometimes. Further, he whitens his behaviour by a seductive theory which is presented as the outcome of the positive sciences, as the loftiest and most complete view that can be taken of the Universe, as the fundamental doctrine of the modern Spinoza, of the

most disinterested, most independent and most worthy of philosophers. "For the philosopher," says M. Sixte, "there is neither crime nor virtue. The theory of good and evil has no other object than to indicate *a number of conventions, useful occasionally, and occasionally puerile*" (p. 54). Thereupon, and with the autobiography of Greslou to support it, a large proportion of readers will vaguely dwell upon the principle of M. Sixte, they will acknowledge it, or at least tolerate it as the object of the book. This principle, however, is contrary to moral law.

The second impression as to argument will affect those engaged in practical life and full of clearly defined notions as to moral law. They, like the others, will feel fascinated by the machinery of your psychology, but their feeling will be of repugnance to it, and when at last they see its central spring, by which I mean the theory as to natural law and determination, they will wish to break it. They will deny the central truth that governs every science, at least as regards that of psychology in what concerns the will. They will refuse to acknowledge a connection between feelings; they will no longer grant that motives, resolutions, acts, are subject to conditions.

They will argue that psychological determinism seeks to absolve the faults of Greslou, his disloyalty, hypocrisy, barbarity, or at any rate to diminish his responsibility. They will say, as does your Juge d'Instruction, that all abstract speculation is a dream, sometimes harmless in its effects, as in the case of Sixte; often, however, baleful as with Greslou. Their argument will therefore be against this abstract science.

That either moral law or abstract science must fall into

discredit through the book seems quite inevitable. I feel this strongly again, after a second reading, and I regret it deeply.

In my opinion the reason of this mistake lies in your conception of Sixte as a representative of modern science. You have given him too slight an intellect, too inadequate a scientific education. He only knows things superficially. He has attended lectures, read books, but nothing more.

With regard to his study of the mind, he has done none of the preparatory work by which when practised with one's own eyes and hands, one learns to dissect a character, a transaction, a part of past or present human life. No one has a right to speak on any special branch of science who has not done individual and careful work in it himself. Further still, Sixte systematically avoids experience; he sees nothing of the actual world beyond his father's shop and the loafers in the parks. He reads no papers; he has not travelled. Of the world of society, politics, literature, commerce, manufactures, of the types of men met with in this world he knows less than the most narrow-minded grocer or most obtuse farm labourer.

And in face of this stupendous ignorance he ventures to draw conclusions upon life and moral law, to reduce the conception of good and evil to a "convention sometimes useful, sometimes puerile!" A true *savant*, a true philosopher, could never argue thus. Read what Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer have to say upon the subject. The words good and bad, vice and virtue, are not terms of convention, arbitrary qualification; they express the *essence* of actions and of individuals. An individual cannot be considered apart, except some abstraction, some suppression be made.

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The human individual exists only in and through society ; as well in describing a cellule of an organism, omit and deny the connection between the cell and the organism—the cell lives of the organism, nourished by the blood and affected by the general health of the whole. Speaking generally, in the manner of Sixte himself, the human cell lives and thinks, thanks to the permanent integrity of the whole social system, thanks to judges and policemen, to the secure conditions of sale and purchase, to butchers and to bakers. Should the cell injure another cell, it does a foolish thing and renders evil for good to the organism.

Sixte realizes this too late ; his remorse is justified. I advise him, in order to atone for the harm he has done, to study the history of laws and institutions, the great social and economic facts ; and to attempt an essay on human nature and human principles.

There will be no need for him to give up psychological determinism ; on the contrary, I consider that without determinism it is impossible to base the right of punishment, the justice of chastisement. Re-read that admirable chapter of Stuart Mill's in the *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy*.

Personally, in my *Origines de la France Contemporaine*, I have always connected the moral qualification with the psychological explanation. In the studies of the Jacobins, Robespierre, Bonaparte, my introductory analysis is always rigorously deterministic, and my final conclusion is always rigorously judicial. As to the accord and even the fundamental identity of responsibility and determinism the highest authorities agree ; Hume, Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, Leibnitz and Spinoza, St. Thomas and Calvin ;

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you can even prove that the more deterministic is a school, the more rigid is its attitude as to moral law.

The Puritans for three hundred years, the Stoics for five hundred years, were the most acute observers, the wisest and strictest physicians of the soul. Better still, they gave the finest examples of austerity, virtue, moral energy ; and the first mentioned believed in predestination, while the others were pantheists and fatalists. To my mind, true knowledge, true philosophy, argues not like Sixte but like Marcus Aurelius.

Forgive my opposition ; it is because your book touches on what I feel most deeply. You almost admire the three volumes of Vallès,¹ the autobiography of a viper pleased by and proud of its venom and its sting. I can but conclude that tastes have altered, that my generation is over, and I take refuge in my quiet corner of Savoy. Perhaps your road, your idea of the Unknowable, of the Beyond, will lead you to some mystic haven, some form of Christianity. Should you there find rest and peace of mind, I will greet you no less warmly than I do to-day.

Adieu, dear friend, once more forgive this long objection, which you yourself urged me to make, and accept the assurances of my old friendship, my continual sympathy, and the keen interest that I take in everything that you will do. . . .

To Charles de Pomairols.

Paris, December 6, 1889.

If Lamartine had been able to choose his biographer, he

¹ Jacques Vingtres : *L'Enfant, le Bachelier, L'Insurgé.*

would have chosen you. You have spoken of a poet with all a poet's sympathy.¹

Before I read your work I had agreed with Sainte-Beuve's judgment on him—"an improvisator."² I had followed Lamartine's career from *Les Girondins* and February 24, 1848. I had also known something of the second period of his life; his extravagant expenditure of fortune, fame and talent. Like all men of my age I had had a feeling of pity, not of surprise, at this. No other man, it seemed, had so abused such great natural gifts, nor so foolishly expended in literature and politics such magnificent powers, innate or acquired.

"Improvisation"—this means want of reflection in thinking, want of exactitude in writing; lack of concentration, seriousness, deep feeling; the habit of trusting too much to a first and superficial impression; impotence in presence of difficulty, whether in life or art. Sainte-Beuve's expression seemed to cover all.

Your volume, and especially your chapter on the spirituality of Lamartine, gives another explanation, ingenuous and wholly favourable. I must consider it. I cannot though promise my complete conversion. Most of the passages you quote leave me unconvinced; the style especially, and in so far as I can judge, a writer lives only by his style. Two or three more generations will find his sentiments no longer understood. Posterity demands a perfect form, a unique and definite expression, to rouse its interest in an old survival. Just so with insects caught and preserved in amber. It is the amber that preserves them; other insects, once as full of life, have fallen into dust. . . .

¹ Lamartine, *Étude de Morale et d'Esthétique*.

² *Causeries du Lundi*, XI, 496.

*To André Chevrillon.**February 4, 1890.*

. . . My second specific against depression of mind is to have an object in life. At your age I wished to acquire a conception of man, not merely in order to be able to write it down and publish it, but to have it for my personal satisfaction; and at Nevers and Poitiers I started upon my researches. For eighteen years I went on studying, following the necessary courses, and doing all the introductory work, not hurrying in any way, for I told myself that psychology can be enjoyed when cold. This study greatly helped me. In my hours of despondency, which were as black and long as yours, I could always feel that there was something worthy of achievement, and which still retained for me its first attraction. Try to find something of this kind for yourself, apart from mere scientific or literary success. . . .

I consider that the hope of success, even success itself, is not enough for one. Man needs an object, something he cares for for its own sake; generally this is wealth, position; sometimes, however, something that will be peculiarly his own, some knowledge that he wants to gain, some problem that he desires to solve before he can find peace of mind. . . .

*Notes.**Conversation with Monseigneur d'Hulst.**April 3, 1890.*

(He is to send me some written particulars; meanwhile these are his replies to my principal questions.)

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I. Nearly the whole of the clergy would be prepared to agree to the separation of Church and State under the following conditions :—

(1) A separate endowment, independent of the Budget, not under yearly control, and administered by the Bishops with the collaboration or supervision of the State. He and several others would even accept the arrangement suggested by myself, viz., full restitution to the Church of ecclesiastical buildings, churches, presbyteries, seminaries, and an endowment subject to yearly diminution for a space of fifty years, the gifts of the faithful making up the increasing deficiency.

(2) The consideration of dioceses and parishes (not the French Catholic Church) as civilians, with no interference on the part of the Conseil d'État and the tribunals against legacies and gifts bestowed upon them.

(3) The adoption of the American system on behalf of the ecclesiastical funds ; the entrustment to a Bishop, aided by a Grand Vicaire and a Curé, of the administration of the Church money of a diocese. Three laymen to be nominated by these three for the purpose of forming with them an administrative board.

II. The adoption of the American system with regard to the nomination of Bishops :—

(1) A list of eligible candidates to be drawn up by the parish priests of each district.

(2) The selection by the Bishops of the province of three candidates from among those on the list.

(3) The selection by the Pope of one of these three candidates.

The Pope does not desire the veto held by the Government ;

at present he can exercise it in the case of provincial priests ordained by the Bishops. Should the Pope disapprove of a Curé chosen by the Bishop, he can institute a formal inquiry about him through the Prefect, who, again, inquires through the local Maire ; it can happen that the Maire may be on bad terms with the candidate as his priest, and so give an unfavourable verdict. Consequently the candidate would be excluded, even should counter-inquiries on the part of the Bishop prove the objections unfounded.

The general tendency of the Government is to prevent capable men from becoming parish priests. The desire is to keep the clergy down. The timid and the servile are preferred, particularly those who feign Republican sentiments. It is otherwise with the nomination of Bishops. In their case it is the Government that nominates, and the Pope who has the veto. Consequently the Government usually comes to terms with the Nuntio before the nomination. (Note the case in Bavaria, and the arbitrary attitude of the Government with regard to the Nuncio and Saint-René Taillandier.) There would, therefore, be danger in according the veto to the Government in the choice of Bishops.

III. He prefers the Belgian system to the French. To this I oppose the testimony of Ernest Picard, ex-ambassador at Brussels, and the hostility between the Catholic and the Liberal parties, who, were they Frenchmen with French nerves, would come to blows, the nomination being in the hands of butchers and bakers, and the choice between Catholics and Liberals.

Hulst replies that this arises from the equal balance of the

two, several thousand votes more or less giving each in turn a majority in Parliament. There is nothing like it in France, where the Roman Catholic party is in the minority. I object that any Roman Catholic party is necessarily a political party, be it in the majority or in the minority, since the Roman Catholic Church claims to itself all that civil powers claim, and since her adherents must vote in this intent—namely, for the maintenance of the temporal power of the Papacy, for educational control, and for the exemption of the clergy from military service, etc. Mark the coalition with absolute monarchism after 1815 in France, Italy, Spain and Austria.

This is, in his opinion, an insoluble difficulty ; no boundaries having been arranged between the two powers, there must necessarily be friction, and the matter becomes one of opportunity and circumstance, tact and prudence, material concessions.

IV. In the matter of the Seminaries the State no longer interferes. However, since the rule of M. Grévy the endowments have dwindled down to one. The Bishops supplement them as they can, through the donations of the faithful. The Seminarists number some 10,000. On the one hand the Faculté de Théologie Catholique is no longer represented in the Sorbonne ; on the other the Sorbonne has a Faculté de Théologie Protestante, that of Strasburg having been removed to Paris.

V. From what classes are the secular clergy now recruited ? Formerly the rich farmer class supplied them ; this class has now become more *bourgeois*, has fewer children, and the position of curé is less respected, less attractive. (See as to this *Le Péril de l'Église*, by Mgr. Bougaud.) A

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well-conducted boy from some poor family receives free education as a cleric, at the instance of the Bishops. The law of 1850 and the rise of Roman Catholic colleges has encouraged ecclesiastical recruiting among the better classes, but this is generally for the regular clergy, not for the secular.

VI. The Praying Orders, especially the Carmelites, lead a sufficiently healthy life. They have much manual work, sweeping, washing, cooking, mending, sewing. They read and study, especially the Chartreuse. An abbess of the Carmelites in Normandy has written the life of St. Theresa, the best work written by a woman, in the opinion of Mgr. Hulst.

VII. There is an inadequate standard of education among the French clergy. This is what is objected by the Bavarian clergy, the Abbé Duchesne alone being excepted. There are only three Benedictine houses of learning, and the ecclesiastical professorships at the Sorbonne were generally unoccupied. There is, however, an improvement now. There is no chair of Greek at Saint Sulpice, but one for Hebrew, another for Church History.

The Free Catholic School of Mgr. d'Hulst undertakes to rectify this deficiency. (I have noticed a very full curriculum advertised for this school, embracing mathematics, physics, chemistry, law and history). It is a Sorbonne for Saint Sulpice, from which it draws some thirty pupils. There are, I think, two hundred pupils all told.

VIII. As to the hostility of the present Government towards Roman Catholicism and the Church, the church funds being low they are managed by the prefects; at Saint Denis, for instance, a place of 30,000 souls, necessary repairs have called for the intervention of the Commune

and the State as legal owners of the buildings and, therefore, bound to pay the greater part of the expenses.

Monsieur Hérold, however, Prefect of the Seine department, declares that before having recourse to this help, other church expenses must be first cut down, the emolument of the Vicaire especially—1,200 francs—should be reduced to 450, according to the law passed during the first Empire. The Vicaire is given a lodging at 600 francs per annum.

The religious communities are subject to heavy dues. The Petites Soeurs des Pauvres have their fixed property in Paris rated at 1,200,000 francs. They pay the ground tax and that on doors, windows, etc., also the annual tax of mortmain in place of the usual legacy duties ; on the death of a sister a valuation is made as to the share of the deceased in the general property of the community, and the legacy duty is paid on this amount.

IX. The annual expense of a Brother of the Écoles Chrésiennes, and of a Soeur de Charité, dependent on the pay given them when called to serve in a commune or in a private establishment, is 800 francs for a Brother, 600 for a Sister, decreasing to 500 or 450 francs. In Paris it is 1,000 francs for a Brother.

X. All the communities for women are, in accordance with the decree of the Council of Trent, subject to the Ordinary, that is to say, the Bishop of the diocese. He appoints their confessors and is empowered to absolve them from their vows and allow them to return to civil life.

Male communities, however, are only under the rule of the superior of the house, though they require episcopal sanction as to preaching, the administration of the Sacraments, and every public matter.

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*To Alexis Delaire.*¹

April 19, 1890.

Had I to show the difference that separates 1889 from 1789, I should ask my reader to compare two documents ; one of these being the Declaration of Rights under the Constituante and the Convention with the debates that form a commentary on this, the other should be the book just published by you on the different aspects of social science.

The first of these shows the conception of mankind as formed by the men of a hundred years ago. Nothing seemed more *simple*, according to their views. With the conception of mankind in general, a conception too concise and abbreviated to be anything but inexact, they constructed their imaginary edifice. Their method was a good one as applied to demolition ; not, however, for construction. Of all their achievements one thing only has remained intact, the metric system,—since this deals with quantities and not with human souls.

A mere glance through the evidences that you have collected suffices to show, however, that of all objects of research human society is doubtless the most *complex*. Family, parish, province, state ; Church, school, hospital ; agricultural, commercial, industrial enterprise ;—each of these human groups, at every period and in every country, has been a sort of distinct individual, a living organism, composed of various organs depending one upon the other, demanding special study and dissection on the part of those who wish to understand it. Without daily contact with

¹ This letter serves as preface to *La Réforme Sociale et le Centenaire de la Révolution*. Paris, 1890.

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things and people, without the power and habit of mental representation of the daily thoughts and dominating impulses that govern the conduct, not of men in general, but of a given man under given conditions, this cannot be understood. Hence the usefulness of precise and circumstantial monographs such as that of Le Play ; they can be met with now on all sides, and with differing plans and methods. I will only mention two of the most recent and most comprehensive : *La Russie et l'Empire des Tsars*, by Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, and *The American Commonwealth*, by Mr. Bryce.

In this direction and at this rate of progress we shall have traversed the descriptive period within the next half-century. In biology it lasted till the time of Bichat and Cuvier ; in sociology we are still no farther advanced. . . . Yet we shall not easily return to the superficial generalities and empty formulas of 1789. Public opinion is decided as to this. It is no longer only specialists and *savants* who claim proofs and statistics ; the general public also calls for these. The literature and painting of to-day also tend to prove that individuality, local colour, special characteristics, is what is most required ; in short, that must be studied which distinguishes the individual from his kind, and prevents his being treated as a mere numerical unit. It was quite the opposite tendency, the simplifying tendency, which, at the close of the eighteenth century, conceived the theory of the abstract man, the abstract citizen, the despotic and anarchical idea of the sovereignty of the people and the omnipotence of the State, of levelling prejudices, and constitutions framed on parallel lines.

None but the ignorant and fanatic can take the axioms of

the *Contrat Social* quite seriously now. They can serve the purpose of politicians and charlatans, but they are, for the majority, but a scholastic curiosity, a game of deductive logic, a verbal combination of abstract terms which have little in common with actual realities. The plays and novels of the last eighty years can serve as proofs of this ; they are straws upon a current and show the trend of public feeling, the demand made by the ordinary reader as to what new conception has been made of man.

Compare a comedy by Colin d'Harleville, Picard or d'Étienne with one of Émile Augier or Alexandre Dumas, and notice how the creature of convention and reason, characterless and hollow, becomes a creature of reality, complete and living.

The difference is still more marked in novels. Compare Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Madame de Staël's *Delphine* and *Corinne* with the work of the contemporary writers of France and Europe.

It is in this branch of literature that one realises, better than in history and social science, the immense distance that separates the old ideas from the new, the abstract man reduced to a mere numerical unit, from the complete and complex man of modern conception.

Besides the positive and historical monographs that can rank with that of Le Play, there are others imaginative but none the less suggestive, for when composed with conviction and skill they show us what observation, properly so called, can acquire but partially and express but with hesitation. I mean the workings of the mind, the play of thought and feeling, the depths of soul and spirit. We owe some thirty or forty of such studies to Balzac, and when I

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had the honour of conversing with Monsieur Le Play I occasionally pointed out to him as his collaborators, or at least as illustrators of his work, George Eliot with her description of an English country neighbourhood in *Middlemarch* : Ivan Tourguenief with his studies of Russian youth and Russian peasantry in *Récits d'un Chasseur, Pères et Enfants, Terres Vierges* ; Gustave Flaubert with his picture of a Norman village in *Madame Bovary*.

To André Chevrillon.

July 8, 1890.

. . . With the exception of some passages of fifty to a hundred lines in length I have never cared for anything of Browning's but *The Ring and the Book*, which is, of course, an intelligible and connected masterpiece throughout. He probably shows genius in all his writings, but what hinders his reader from understanding him is that he writes his thoughts merely for his own satisfaction, without considering his readers, without preparing, explaining or sacrificing anything.

A Death in the Desert, for instance, after a hundred incomparable lines, seems to me to degenerate into a monotonous repetition of the same idea, like a spring that gushes up perpetually without realizing that there are vessels waiting to receive it. . . .

To John Durand.

August, 1890.

. . . I have already been through Huxley's book on
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Hume. It is not as fine as I had thought. He omits the fundamental question, so well propounded by Hume; he explains by what mental mechanism we have "expectations," but he does not inquire by what singular coincidences these expectations are often justified nor as to the objective structure of things on which our subjective prevision can be based. The essential point is to argue for or against what Hume propounds. . . .

To Georges Brandès.

Menthon, September 4, 1890.

. . I thank you for the high place you have assigned to Heinrich Heine. From the artistic point of view, which is the only one I care to take, he is the greatest poet Germany has seen since the death of Goethe, possibly also the most intense poet since Dante. Heart and brain are quite unique in him; all who care for style and psychological treatment must acknowledge his superiority. . . .

To M. G. Saint-René Taillandier.

Paris, November 21, 1890.

. . . The only point on which I insist is the obligation of writing for the *eye*, as if the eye alone were reading, without the help of gesture and of accent. This is the actual case of the reader,—the author is not beside him to read aloud. What I most blame in modern style is that for the unaided eye the written phrase is often difficult to understand, that it is ambiguous, inexact, necessitating the presence of the author to give by means of tone and

gesture what the printed page cannot give alone. The right principle to follow is : Allow no licences such as occur in conversation ; maintain strict propriety of diction and perfect clearness of construction. . . .

Among our classical writers, Pascal excepted, La Fontaine stands first in simple effect, and La Bruyère for composite effects. Our masterpieces begin with Calvin and Montaigne and close with the seventeenth century. Among the writers of antiquity Plato excels in simplicity of expression, Tacitus in composite effects. I cannot name a single German author who can write good prose. In Italy the *Dialogues de Leopardi* are good. England, from Swift to Macaulay, excels in this respect.

To Madame H. Taine.

Barbizon, May, 1891.

. . . The forest is superb ; the foliage exquisitely fresh and tender, even on the great oaks ; the undergrowth is as delicately tinted as young clover. Broom in full flower stands as high as a man, and gloriously aglow with sunlight ; anemones of uncommon variety grow as large and many-tinted as tulips. It is twenty years since I had seen spring in the forests. My walking power is better than I thought ; I lost my way lately and walked nine miles.

The birches are exquisite, and look like young girls in festal robes, dazzlingly fresh beneath the sunlight,—far more so than the ladies at your ball yesterday. Most fascinating, though, of all are the young oaks ; their leaves are as long as my thumb, yellow in tone, the under-surface transparent to the heart. I spent an hour yesterday stretched at

full length on the ground with one of these fairy things in my hand . . .

How beautiful is the long beech avenue between Fran-chard and the high road to Fontainebleau ! The tops of the giant trees loom grey and phantom-like against the blue of the sky ; all else is green—green of varied shades—stretching away into the distance till it is lost in light. At some fifty paces from me a doe with her fawn beside her stood watching me from among the trees. Seen from the heights above the green mass is like an ocean full of multitudinous and joyous life. . . .

The old oaks are still dry, everything else is green ; the massive beeches are in leaf, the birches in their lace robes look like girls at their first ball. . . . The forest makes up for all to me. No noise of omnibuses here,—vague solitudes, long murmurings of the wind among the tree-tops, little rustlings in the twigs, here and there four notes of a bird's song ; all the varied forms of plant life, calm, luxuriant, resigned to whatever may befall. . . .

To-day and yesterday not a ray of sunlight all day long. It has rained for two hours this afternoon, and yet the forest has not lost its charm. The great beeches, in leaf from head to foot, show a more tender verdure than when their leaves are mature. It needs a Flemish palette, the touch of Rubens, to depict the exquisite delicacy and freshness of all this beauty of young spring.

I have been re-reading the Gospel of St. Mark. It is the work of an illiterate, straightforward artisan, something like the *cahiers* of Coignet. But what a distance between the figure he depicts and that of the official Christ ! I will show you some striking passages. . . .

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To M. A. Cleis.

Menthon, July 5, 1891.

. . . I am glad that my article on the Roman Catholic Church has not displeased you as compared with others. I endeavoured to write as if I had been a denizen of Saturn or of Jupiter descended on the Earth, which is the scientific point of view, and history is a science, at least in my opinion.

To his Daughter.

Champel, August, 1891.

. . . I am glad you are so happy. Enjoy your youth and eagerness. Such memories belong to one for ever ; I shall always retain some, especially those of Fontainebleau ; particularly I recall a vision of early spring,—an amphitheatre in the forest, nine o'clock of the morning, myriads of young trees and tender shoots beneath a light veil of bluish haze, all throbbing with the sense of universal life.

. . . Since you tell me of your reading let me ask André not to recite Verlaine to you, and you I would beg not to read the lyric poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. These poems, and those of Rossetti and Swinburne in England, of the Goncourts, Daudet, Bourget and the decadents in France are not healthy. They have the effect of haschich or of morphine on the mind. They omit half their art, and are like lame men who having atrophied one leg are quite proud of hopping on the other. In every work of art there are two elements ; the more obvious of the two con-

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sists in the vivid and passionate expression of a personal and momentary feeling ; the other is the intellectual part and consists of a general and collective idea, a careful design, and a logical co-ordination of the whole towards a definitely planned effect.

The above writers, with Daudet at their head, only value and understand the first of these ; the second they deny, as it is beyond their power of attainment ; they are impressionists in art, despising anatomy, model and perspective ; theirs is but a passing fashion, for no artist has ever achieved immortality but by the union of both the elements. The second is more essential than the first if one desires to last and to be understood.

I want André to read aloud to you *The Task*, by Cowper ; or better still the first book of *Paradise Lost*, or Milton's account of the Creation, which fully equals Haydn's oratorio. Read also his *Comus*, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. I am glad you appreciate the poetry of Goethe ; you and André should read *The Fisher*, *The Wizard's Apprentice*, and *Imagination*.

To Madame H. Taine.

Champel, August 8, 1891.

. . . There is nothing new to tell you of, except the growing necessity of guarding myself against intrusions. Yesterday it was a Russian Count ; this morning a M. Korsono, my old disciple at the Beaux-Arts, with an avalanche of big words as to my popularity in Russia.

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A little before he arrived, Maupassant came in very over-excited ; he had put on seven or eight blankets the night before because his feet had been so cold, and in the night he had had to change his shirt five or six times owing to profuse perspiration. He discoursed at length on the subject of his umbrella, apparently unique of its kind, and also discussed his walking stick, a most marvellous weapon with which he has killed a score of dogs. As Dr. Glatz would not allow him to take cold douches at once, he left the place in twenty-four hours' time, declaring that the doctors were fools, that he needed stimulating treatment, and that he meant to try all the spas of Europe. . . .

To Georges Lyon.

Paris, December 9, 1891.

. . . I should be glad indeed had my writings the desirable influence on young minds that you attribute to them ; we only work with that object before us, but we stand like the workers at the Gobelins behind our webs and do not know whether the spectators talking so loudly on the other side have deigned to comprehend or even watch our work.

I, therefore, thank your young friend and own that I have always cared for, if not metaphysics properly so termed, at least philosophy, by which I mean views on the fundamental and general nature of things.

My studies, however, are not based on a conception *à priori*, a hypothesis, but on experimental and very simple

observation, since all that is abstract is what has been detached from the concrete, whether case or individual, in which it has its dwelling. It consequently follows that in order to grasp the abstract one must observe it in the case or individual which is its natural environment; this will lead to the study of examples as well chosen and significant as possible. This method with me took precedence of doctrine, if doctrine I ever preached; through this alone my researches have been found to converge. Monsieur V. Giraud has well detected their connection and their unity, for the last forty years all my work has consisted of psychology applied or abstract. I am also glad that he has not, like Bourget, ranked me among the pessimists. Pessimism and optimism can only be permitted to poets and artists, not to men of scientific mind.

To turn to the question of religion, what seems to me incompatible with modern science is not Christianity, but the Roman Catholicism of to-day; abroad a liberal Protestantism seems to offer conciliation.

As to determinism, Giraud is right in stating that to my view it does not exclude moral responsibility, but, on the contrary, constructs it. The apparent difficulties of the question seem to me merely verbal; attention must be paid to the exact meaning of such words as necessity, constraint, initiation, obligation.

I fear I shall not have strength to write the treatise on the Will to which he alludes; I am too old and weary to take up another burden. I leave it to a younger generation. . . .

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To the Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul.

Paris, May 14, 1892.

. . . At my age and with the necessity before me of finishing the long task that I have undertaken, I cannot venture to promise the little book upon Sainte-Beuve. Through personal intercourse with him I know much as to his private life, and in an article in the *Débats* which appeared shortly after his decease, I called attention to the great extent of his scientific training. The rest of my study would be based upon his writings ; of his actual biography I should only give a sketch.

The essential interest in him seems to me not to lie in his private life, but in his intellectual and speculative sphere ; the part he took in criticism and history, the justice and extent of his ideas, his methods, his psychological analysis, the two or three great advances that he made for science. Herein I shall always remain faithful in my admiration for him, as I also retain a lively memory of his kindness, a high appreciation of his perfect probity on literary matters. My regard for him will always be unchanged.

The new generation is on the whole unjust regarding him ; while some foolish contemporaries have been strikingly ungrateful. His books, however, remain to show all who are able to appreciate them that his words in social gatherings were often much misrepresented. . . .

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To Gaston Paris.

Menthon, July 23, 1892.

. . . As happens every year, I have been forced to stop my work. I have still to discuss the domestic aspect of French Society, the family such as it was left by the Code Civile and the other institutions of the Consulate and Empire. This last study, should I have strength to undertake it, will be more depressing than its predecessors, for it touches us more closely, and the subject is more fraught with serious issues,—our excessive tenderness for our children is in itself an evil. I was probably wrong in beginning this series of researches twenty years ago. They are darkening my old age, and I am growing more and more conscious that from a practical standpoint they will prove of little service. We are being borne along by a vast and rapid current, of what avail is it to write about its rapidity and depth !

I am starting for Champel early in August where I shall spend three weeks. My wife and children are well ; their young friends arrive in large numbers for boating and lawn-tennis. M. and Mme. Boutmy are with us here, and supervising the building of their house. . . .

To John Durand.

Boringe, September 14, 1892.

. . . Champel has not done me any good this year. The excessive heat was bad for me. . . .

My mental weariness remains the same ; I am writing nothing. By the thirty-first of October, my last chapter—

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on the Family—will be hardly more than just begun. Shall I find new vigour of mind in Paris, and shall I be able to complete my book ? I do not know at all ; I feel as if old age had suddenly overwhelmed me—hardly surprising at my years. . . .

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